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Joseph Labrow Means

Sermons chiefly funeral

1 Salter W. A
2 Marsden Benj^a
3 " "
4 Porter J Scott
5 Hutton Joseph
6 Bunney Thomas
7. Kelley Joseph
8 Blackburn John.

SERVICES

AT

THE ORDINATION

OF

MR WILLIAM A. SALTER,

AS PASTOR OF

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,

MEETING IN

HENRIETTA STREET, BRUNSWICK SQUARE,

LONDON,

OCTOBER 5th, 1836.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Discourses are published with the hope that they may, in their printed form, perpetuate and extend the interest which they excited when delivered. Many who had the happiness of being present at the Services, especially the Members of the Church to whom they were addressed, were anxious not to lose the beneficial impressions that had been made; and they also thought that what had been profitable to themselves might not be without advantage to some of their fellow Christians. They regret the delay that has taken place, from circumstances which they could not control; yet they cannot but believe that the Discourses contain too much of what is truly valuable to suffer materially from any partial subsidence of the feelings they had awakened.

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ORDER OF THE SERVICES.

MORNING.

REV. G. PRITCHARD read the Scriptures, and prayed.

REV. J. J. DAVIES delivered the Introductory Address, and asked the usual questions.

REV. JOHN DYER offered the Ordination Prayer.

REV. W. H. MURCH gave the Charge to the Minister.

REV. J. WOODWARK concluded with prayer.

EVENING.

REV. R. W. OVERBURY read the Scriptures, and prayed.

REV. F. A. COX, D.D., LL.D., preached to the congregation.

REV. J. WALLIS concluded with prayer.

ORDINATION SERVICE.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

THERE is much in services like the present that is calculated to please the benevolent mind, and solemnly to impress the reflective spirit. These services afford proofs of the Saviour's continued care of his church; they indicate the progress of his kingdom; and they facilitate our conceptions of its future increase and universal prevalence—when "Jerusalem shall become a praise in the whole earth." But these services lose much of their importance, our views of them are exceedingly partial and defective, if they do not extend beyond the limits of time, with its fleeting interests, and enter directly into the solemn realities of a future and endless state of being. The union which is this day recognised between our beloved brother and the Christian church worshipping within these walls, is one of the most important which can possibly be formed on earth, or conceived by man. The connexion between the pastor and the flock is not intended to be of short duration: how long, indeed, it may continue, or how speedily it may be dissolved, is known only to Him who has the keys of death and of the invisible world—who holds in his hands the destinies of all men. The career of the devoted minister, the whole of whose conduct proves how willing he is to spend and be spent for the honour of his Redeemer and the well-being of his flock, is seldom lengthened; sometimes it is peculiarly short: the solemnities of his ordination are but the preludes to those of his sepulture. And this consideration should induce all Christian pastors to labour the more assiduously, and their people to give the more earnest heed to the things which are spoken by them. God, in his wise and gracious providence, may also remove a Christian minister from one sphere of useful labour to another; and we should all be willing to labour, not only in those stations which we might choose for ourselves, but wherever our Divine Master is pleased to fix our habitation. But when this important relation is entered into, I conceive nothing is farther from the intention and desires of the pastor, or of the people, than that it should speedily terminate. A union so sacred in its character,

and recognised with so much solemnity, cannot have been formed precipitately, and it ought not to be dissolved lightly. How great then! how momentous! must be the consequences of the union publicly recognised this day. Deeply interesting will be its effects, in many instances, in the present state of being, on individual character and on domestic order; but eternity alone can disclose its highest and greatest results. It will tell, with a power of which we can form no just conception, on the eternal destiny of the pastor, and the people of his charge. It will tell, with fearful interest, on the solemnities of the judgment day; when the faithful minister will receive the welcome sentence "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" when those whom he has begotten unto Christ by the gospel shall be his crown of rejoicing; when those who rejected the overtures of reconciliation which he addressed to them shall perish in their sins. It behoves us all, therefore, on this occasion, to carry forward our thoughts and views to eternity; we should realize the future, the final, the invisible; we should deeply feel the powers of the world to come. We can enter into the spirit of the solemn services now before us only as we have that faith in vigorous exercise, which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

A relation, so sacred in its nature, so fearful in its responsibilities, so momentous in its results, ought not to be entered into without much humble and earnest prayer. It is not without special prayer for Divine direction, that this Christian people have invited our beloved brother to take the oversight of them in the Lord; and, aware of the importance of the office with which they proposed to invest him, of the arduous character of the duties which it imposes, of the solemn responsibilities which it involves, of his own insufficiency for the discharge of its functions, "for who is sufficient for these things?" and of the magnitude of the interests depending upon it; it is not without much fear and trembling, not without careful deliberation, anxious searching of heart, and fervent prayer to the God of all grace, that he has accepted the invitation. And those who have been requested to take a part in the services of this day, are here, not to dictate to the church, not to appoint a pastor over them, not to qualify our esteemed friend for the work of the ministry, or for the discharge of the episcopal functions, not to authorize him to preach the gospel, and administer the ordinances of the house of God; but to mingle our best feelings and sympathies with theirs, to unite with them in devout thanksgiving to the great head of the church, and, by prayer, and supplication, with all solemnity and affection, to "commend them to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all those that are sanctified." It is in perfect accordance with the devotional character of this day's services, that, in connexion with prayers and thanksgivings, affectionate counsels should be addressed to the pastor and the flock; counsels, the fruit of wisdom, and the result of the experience of many years in the ministerial and pastoral offices, but all dictated, or clearly sanctioned, by the word of God. But there is one part of our exercises on these occasions which generally, and

almost necessarily, assumes a controversial character. For this, however, we are not to blame; it is the result of the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed. It is just and reasonable that on these occasions we should state our views of the nature and origin of a Christian church; and that we should explain the principles on which we act in matters of social religion. But such is the position of ecclesiastical affairs in this kingdom, that it is almost impossible to explain our principles, without stating some of the objections we entertain against that sect which, in this country, is established by acts of parliament, is supported by compulsory laws, is patronized by the government, and allied to the state. A right rev. prelate has been pleased to state in his place in the house of lords, that the dissenters of all classes are only in the proportion of one to twenty-five of the population of the country; the twenty-four being understood to be members of the church of England, of course, attached to her doctrine and discipline, receiving religious instruction from her large and efficient body of eighteen thousand clergymen, and prepared, by her watchful care, for a better world. If this witness be true, we, as dissenters of the congregational order, are but a mere handful of men, —a minority, in point of numbers at least, below contempt. But as our principles appear to us scriptural and important, this very circumstance renders it peculiarly necessary, that by ourselves and our children they should be clearly understood, and duly appreciated.

But however desirable it might be to enter fully into the important question of the nature and constitution of a Christian church, and to explain and vindicate the principles of non-conformity; I can attempt nothing farther, in the present address, than to offer a few remarks, designed not so much to defend our views and principles, as to aid candid and inquiring minds to form correct views for themselves.

I. Allow me, then, to remark, in the first place, that we are impressed with *the paramount importance of forming correct general principles in religion, and of uniformly, and conscientiously, acting upon them.* The importance of correct general principles in religion must be obvious to every reflective mind; and it is scarcely possible unduly to magnify it. It is by furnishing us with general principles, which are capable of an easy application to innumerable instances of religious and moral conduct, that the sacred volume becomes a sure and sufficient rule of conduct, "a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path." It should be the object of every Christian, therefore, carefully to mark these general principles, clearly to understand them, and fully to imbibe their spirit; so that he may apply them with facility to particular cases as they occur. If a few general principles clearly inculcated in the sacred volume, had been understood and acted upon, in every age, by some who ought to have known the truth, numberless wounds had been spared the consciences of those for whom the Saviour died; innumerable scandals had been avoided; and, humanly speaking, many immortal souls had been saved from going down to destruction. In the present day, especially, it behoves us to bestow no ordinary de-

gree of care on the formation of general principles of moral and religious conduct. We have evidently fallen on times of no common interest in the history of the world, and teeming with the most important results. It may become necessary for every man to act his part: it is certain that every man's work will be tried, that all systems will be shaken, all principles tested, and nought will abide but that which is founded in truth and righteousness. We are in considerable danger, also, from the general recognition of expediency as the only rule of conduct. This is the only rule of conduct acknowledged by many of our crafty politicians and popular moralists; it is recommended by some of our learned divines, and acted upon by many of our religious professors. The great inquiry with multitudes in the present day is, not what is right, but what is expedient. But a more pernicious rule of conduct it were scarcely possible to devise: its direct tendency is to remove all the ancient landmarks of morality and religion; to destroy, in the human mind, all sense of distinction between right and wrong. Hence it is peculiarly important that we should fully understand, and cordially embrace, those general principles of moral and religious conduct, which are inculcated in the sacred volume. Our inquiry should ever be, not, what is expedient? but, what is right?—what is scriptural? — what is the will of God? We are persuaded, indeed, that it will be found, in the end, that that which is righteous is also the most advantageous. Taking into account the whole duration of our being, and all our varied interests, it will surely be found that that which is right is really beneficial; that that which is characterized by excellence is also distinguished by utility. "Say unto *the righteous*, it shall be *well with him*, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." But we are concerned, not with consequences, but with duties; and it is well for us that it is so: we are incapable of forming a just estimate of all the results of any line of conduct, or even of any one action of our lives. It is not for us to attempt a calculation of consequences, or to estimate the probable, and possible, results of our actions; this is not our province; here we are immediately out of our depth; this is a profound abyss which no line of ours can fathom. We have one question to propose, and but one; it is this,—What is right?—what is scriptural?—what is the will of God? And when this is plain, to hesitate is sin. Our maxim should ever be, let us do that which is right, and leave results with God: and it is our consolation to be assured, that nothing can really harm us while we are the followers of that which is good.

II. Allow me to remark, again, that we receive it as a principle equally important and indubitable, that *the Bible contains the whole of the religion of Christians.* We are Christians only so far as we cordially embrace those truths which the sacred scriptures reveal; as our conduct is regulated by those precepts which they inculcate; as our minds are imbued with those influences which they exert. This remark applies to our *social* religion no less than to that which is strictly *personal;* and the former yields in importance only to the latter. Hence it follows that *a church is Christian, or apostolic, only so far as,*

in form and spirit, it resembles those churches which were planted by the inspired apostles of our Lord, and their fellow-labourers in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

This remark, I am aware, will be met, by some, with the objection, that the scriptures do not furnish us with any model of a Christian church, or with any definite views of its nature, constitution, and government; that the rules, or rather the hints, contained in the New Testament, on this subject, are of so peculiar a character, that churches of every order may find in them much to support their peculiar principles and practices; but that no church which has any existence, except in Utopia, can have any just pretensions to be formed after the model of the churches of the apostolic age; that the constitution and government of the church must therefore be left, in a great measure, to the wisdom of our ecclesiastical rulers; and that that is the best mode of church government which succeeds best. These are notions which have, of late years, obtained a currency, in my humble opinion, in exact proportion to their fallacy. How any persons accustomed to reflection could, with the New Testament in their hands, have given their sanction to such sentiments, is to me utterly unaccountable, except on the supposition—alas! but too often realized—that we are frequently caught by that which is specious, that we instantly assume its correctness, and forthwith assert it, without ever having submitted it to a careful examination. Hence it is that we have fashions in religious opinions, no less than in the article of dress; and that they are equally subject to change.

It will not be difficult to convince an intelligent and candid mind that the New Testament does afford definite views of the nature and constitution of those churches which were planted, under the direction of the Divine Spirit, in the apostolic age. Allow me to propose the following inquiries.

What was the nature of an apostolic church? that is to say, Was it a religious, or was it a secular body? Was an apostolic church a compulsory, or was it a voluntary society? Was it national, or provincial, or was it congregational?

What were the members of an apostolic church? that is to say, Did the apostolic church include all the inhabitants of Judea, or of the Roman empire, as such? or did it include only "faithful men," or believers in the Lord Jesus Christ? Were the members of the apostolic church Christians on conviction? or were they made Christians by an act of legislation, or by an edict of the Roman emperor?

What were the officers of an apostolic church? Were they "archbishops, diocesan bishops, archdeacons, deans, prebendaries, canons, minor canons, chancellors, vicars general, commissaries, officials, surrogates, proctors, and the rest that bear office in the same?"—or were they, simply, bishops and deacons? *What were their duties?* Did they, like the kings of the Gentiles, exercise dominion over their people? or were they the *ministers* of the flock?

Who was the head of the apostolic church? Was it the Jewish High Priest, or the governor of Judea? or the Roman emperor? or was Jesus, "whom God hath exalted to his own right hand," to whom

He "hath given a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess to the glory of God the Father"—was He recognised and served as the only "head of the body, the church," the source of its vitality and the fountain of its bliss?

By what laws was the apostolic church governed, and by whom were those laws enacted? In whom was the power of legislation vested? Was it in the senate of the land? in the chief magistrate? in the members of the church? or in the officers? or in all these united? Or was He who is made "head over all things for the church," acknowledged to be the only legislator? and was it admitted to be the duty of the people, not to make laws, but to obey those which He had enacted? and of the officers duly to administer them, being themselves examples of cheerful obedience?

It will not, surely, be said, that the New Testament does not furnish us with decided and satisfactory answers to these inquiries: but if these questions be answered, we have gone far towards ascertaining the nature and constitution of a church after the model of the apostolic age.*

If the answer to these questions be that which I think every candid mind will admit it must be, then it necessarily follows, that the ecclesiastical establishment of this country has few things in common with the churches of the apostolic age. Their nature and constitution are not the same; their foundation is not the same; their laws are not the same; their head is not the same; their officers are not the same; their members are not the same; their discipline is not the same; their doctrine is not the same; for, much as it has been the fashion to laud our establishment on the ground of the apostolic purity of her doctrine, there are many things taught by that church which the apostles would have denounced, not simply as erroneous, but as subversive of the entire scheme of Christian truth. I will remind you of one of these errors—the doctrine of BAPTISMAL REGENERATION. That the church of England does inculculate this monstrous notion, it were vain to attempt to deny. But this is not a slight inaccuracy—an innoxious sentiment; it is a grave, nay, it is a fundamental error; it must necessarily poison the entire religious system of every one who adopts it.† Hence it is that an *Orthodox churchman* is always distinguished from an *Evangelical churchman;* and great as has been the increase of faithful ministers in the establishment of late years, the orthodox, in opposition to the evangelical, clergy, constitute, at this hour, a prodigious majority of about eight to one!

The arguments which the friends of the English hierarchy urge in her favour are various; but the main pillars, on which, in their estimation, she rests securely, and from which she derives pre-eminent strength and beauty, are two; that is to say, that she is a national establishment, and that her government is episcopal.

* This subject is more fully discussed in an "Address on Ecclesiastical Establishments," recently published, by the author.

† The charge recently delivered to his clergy by the zealous Bishop of Exeter, affords an affecting illustration of this remark.

But if we derive our ideas of a Christian church from the New Testament, an alliance with the state will appear a serious objection to any ecclesiastical body which sustains it. We know by whom the Christian church was first allied to the secular power: before the days of Constantine, Christianity was never a national religion; and we know what has been the consequence of that alliance; the church lost far more in moral strength and beauty than she acquired in wealth and splendour. That event was attended by no real good to the church or the state; it effectually corrupted the former, while it failed to exert any purifying influence on the latter. The fruit of this unhallowed alliance have been, pride and despotism, ignorance and secularity, hypocrisy and irreligion. "Pure and undefiled religion" could not exist in so pestilential an atmosphere; neither could a church so secularized, nor a state so priest-ridden, endure its very presence.

These are not to be regarded as unfortunate, but merely accidental, results; they are the necessary consequences of the unnatural union. Ere she could feel her need of the support of the secular arm, Zion must have been despoiled of her strength; ere she could covet worldly pomp and splendour, she must have laid aside the beautiful garments in which her Lord had arrayed her. And it is impossible that a church which has ceased to be animated by the true spirit of religion, should exert a renovating influence on the world. It is common to speak of the corrupt practices which prevail in state churches as abuses. Abuses of Christianity indeed they are; abuses utterly unknown in the apostolic age; yea, abuses which could not possibly have existed if Christianity had retained the position, with relation to the state, which it originally occupied. But they are not abuses of a state religion; they are the legitimate effects of causes which are in active operation there. Philosophy and history equally prove that the real excellence which exists in a state church is accidental; it is forced upon it by the state of things without its pale. Its tendency is to paralyse the intellectual and moral energies of the people, on whom it weighs like an incubus. If left to itself, it not only sinks into a state of complete apathy, but spreads around it the stillness, desolation, and gloom of the grave.

When the church and the state are allied, one party must necessarily obtain the ascendency. If the church be the dominant power we know the result; the government is the mere tool of the priesthood; the sword is ever ready to execute the purposes of that ghostly authority; religion and truth, liberty and charity, are banished from the land, and the most cruel despotism and intolerance everywhere prevail. Happily, in this country, the church, since the reformation, has not had the ascendant. This the jealousy and ambition of Henry VIII., and of his daughter Elizabeth, the mother of our establishment, would not allow. To the nation this is a great advantage, however galling it may be to an aspiring hierarchy. To this circumstance we are indebted for much of our civil and religious freedom, which is often most absurdly ascribed to the tolerant spirit of the church. England owes not a fraction of her freedom, or of

her greatness, to the church ; she has almost invariably opposed the extension of the liberties of the nation.

But while the state has the ascendency what spirituality can obtain in the church ? What can be expected from secular men but secular practices ? We know the considerations which regulate the appointment of ministers of state ; and no one ever supposed that his piety constituted any part of the qualifications of the first minister of the crown for his high office. But the first minister of the crown, besides having many livings at his disposal, has the appointment of the bishops, the pastors, the heads of the church. As a political man, he is influenced by political motives, and he selects for these high ecclesiastical offices his political friends. These, again, who have immense patronage, naturally use it for the promotion of their own relatives and dependents. It is inconsideration alone that expresses the unbounded surprise and horror we have been accustomed to hear, at some affecting instances of this nature, which the spirit of inquiry has, of late years, (not made, for they have always existed, but) discovered. The men, we admit, are not faultless, but it were unjust to throw the whole odium on them ; it belongs much more to the system, of which these iniquities are the legitimate fruits. It is idle to speak of these things as abuses of national establishments. While the church is the dominant power, princes, who ought to be the fathers and protectors of their people, are mere tools in the hands of a crafty and cruel priesthood, to enslave and oppress them. On the other hand, when the state gains the ascendency, the church is the creature of the government ; her chief ministers are worldly men, who owe their appointment and their promotion to their subserviency to the political party which happens to be in power.

Jesus Christ, the founder and Lord of the Christian church, the only King of Zion, never made Christianity a national establishment. He left the church without the prospect of an alliance with the kings of the earth. The Christian religion, as propagated by its Divine Author in Judea, and as diffused by his apostles and disciples to the ends of the earth, was literally a system of dissent. It was repudiated by the established church as a sect or a heresy : " As for this *sect*, we know that it is everywhere spoken against." " We have found this man a ringleader of the *sect* of the Nazarenes." " After the manner which they call heresy or *sect*, so worship I the God of my fathers." During the apostolic age, the church of Christ was a sect, bitterly calumniated, violently opposed, and cruelly persecuted, by the rulers and the priests,—the *authorized teachers* of the people,—both Jewish and Pagan.

These considerations are fatal to a national establishment of Christianity. In the fourth century Constantine effected an alliance between the Christian church and the Roman government ; for reasons not unknown to the world, he declared Christianity the national religion. From that hour a tide of corruption flowed in upon the church, which has not subsided to this day. The spirit of avarice, secularity, pride, and intolerance, seized the ministers of Him whose voice was not heard in the street, and who had not where to

lay his head, and continued to increase until "the man of sin" was fully "revealed." But Jesus sought not for his religion the support of the secular arm. His inspired apostles sought not for the church an alliance with the state. They were engaged in a spiritual warfare, and employed only spiritual weapons. They laboured to establish the reign of righteousness and peace; and for this purpose they used those means which were suited to the nature of man, and adapted to the end which they sought. These miraculous men were so far from seeking the national establishment of Christianity, that they were content to be calumniated as the ringleaders of an insignificant, but dangerous sect.

It is said, indeed, that circumstances have changed since the days of the apostles, and that, therefore, Christianity may now, with propriety, be established. But, we ask, do circumstances present any difficulty to the Almighty? Jesus had "all power in heaven and on earth." He was "king of kings, and lord of lords;" "the hearts of all men were in his hands, and he turned them as the rivers of waters are turned." He could have converted to the faith princes as well as peasants. He might have said to the chief priests and rulers, "Follow me," as effectually as he did to despised publicans, and the humble fishermen of Galilee. When he was on the earth he could have induced Herod, Pilate, and the Elders of the Jews, to have sanctioned his ministry. After his ascension to heaven he might have revealed himself to the Roman emperor as easily as he did to Saul of Tarsus, and with the same effect. He could have rendered Christianity triumphant as a national establishment, no less than in opposition to human authority and power. And, if to infinite Wisdom and Goodness it had appeared right that the church should be established, and, as the national religion, receive at once universal respect and honour, Almighty power could, and would, have accomplished it; and thus the best friends of religion and of mankind, had been spared their innumerable privations, their incessant toils, their constant dangers, their stripes, their dungeons, and their cruel deaths.

But "the church of England is apostolic, because her government is episcopal." This is a "redeeming spirit" in the hierarchy, the influence of which is absolutely magical, and will never fail. It is admitted that corruptions and abuses abound in the church; that there are many inconsistencies and anomalies in her government; that her prelates are oppressed by their parliamentary duties, and have, in a great measure, ceased to be the pastors of their flocks; that evangelical piety is, even to this day, discouraged, and that the enemies of the gospel are found in the high places of the establishment. It is complained that the people have no voice in the selection of their teachers; that their souls are advertized for sale in the newspapers, and are bought in the public market; that the consciences of many of her best ministers are wounded; that they are oppressed by a yoke too heavy for them to bear. But, notwithstanding all this, the church must not be forsaken; separation is still denounced as the heinous sin of schism, if it be not, indeed, the unpardonable offence. Despite of all these crying evils, the church must be adhered to; nay, she

must be lauded as the "truly catholic and apostolic church—the only branch of the true church in these lands;" and to leave her is to leave the only certain way of salvation. And all this worth and glory is attached to the church of England *because she is governed by bishops*.'*

But no two things can be more dissimilar than the episcopacy of the apostolic churches and the prelacy of the English establishment. The prelate of the church of England is an ecclesiastical officer distinct from, and superior to, the priest or presbyter. It is his high prerogative to ordain the presbyters, and to rule over them and their congregations: but the bishop of the apostolic churches was not a distinct officer from the presbyter; the presbyter and the bishop, in the first and purest age of Christianity, were one and the same. This is evident from the following passages:—"And from Miletus he (Paul) sent to Ephesus, and called the *elders* of the church; and when they were come to him, he said unto them, Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers* (bishops) to feed the church of God which he purchased with his own blood."† "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders* in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly: for a *bishop* must be blameless, as the steward of God."‡ "The *elders* which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, *taking the oversight thereof* (fulfilling the episcopal office), not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind."§

Hence there arises also another distinction: "the bishop of the apostolic age was the humble pastor of one congregation; the bishop of the church of England is a mitred lord in lawn, the spiritual ruler of an extensive diocese."‖ In the apostolic age one congregation not unfrequently enjoyed the superintendence and labours of more than one bishop. The Holy Spirit constituted all the elders at Ephesus bishops over the church of God in that city. In the church at Philippi, also, there were bishops and deacons. And the apostle Paul evidently hoped that Titus might be able to appoint elders or bishops in every city in Crete. But in the church of England the state of things is completely reversed. Here we have, not many bishops superintending one congregation, but many congregations under the superintendence of one bishop,—there being upwards of eleven thousand congregations to share the pastoral care and solicitude of twenty-four bishops and two archbishops. These simple facts clearly prove that

* And yet the *bishops of other churches* may as well expect to wear the triple crown as to ascend the pulpits of our establishment! Whatever may be thought of her claims to apostolicity on other grounds, the whole world must confess that the English establishment is the most *catholic* church the sun ever shone upon.

† Acts, xx. 17, 18, 28. ‡ Titus, i. 5, 6, 7. § 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

‖ See an "Address on Ecclesiastical Establishments," by the Author.

the bishop of the apostolic age and the bishop of the church of England are alike only in name; the offices are perfectly dissimilar. Unutterably absurd, therefore, are the pretensions of the English hierarchy to be called an apostolic church, because she is governed by bishops.

I may be permitted here to express surprise and regret that those whose privilege it is to have attained to scriptural views of this subject should appear to acquiesce in the unjust pretensions of the establishment, by invariably using a scriptural term to designate an unscriptural office. We appropriate the title of bishop exclusively to an ecclesiastical dignitary utterly unknown to the apostolic age, while we never apply it to the officer to whom it is uniformly applied in the New Testament, and of whose peculiar functions it is beautifully expressive.

III. It is time that we proceed to a third general remark, on which we shall not insist at any length—*that those societies are in every respect the BEST which, in form and spirit, are most closely assimilated to the churches of the apostolic age.* After the observations which have already been made, it may, I conceive, be admitted as proved, that we may learn from the New Testament the nature and constitution of those churches which were planted by the apostles and their fellow-labourers; and to my mind the proposition assumes the clearness and force of a principle, that those societies, by whatever name they may be called, and with whatever contempt they may be treated, by the men of this world, are the most scriptural, and in every respect the best, which, in form and spirit, are most closely assimilated to the churches of the apostolic age. Indeed, it is only so far as our religious societies are assimilated to those of the apostolic age that they are entitled to the appellation of Christian churches.

The churches of the apostolic age were formed by inspired men—men who had received the Holy Spirit, not only in his sanctifying influences, but also in his miraculous gifts, and were led by that Divine Agent into all truth. The Great Head of the church was always present with his apostles in the formation of these churches; they were constituted in accordance with the dictates of infinite intelligence and goodness; they were the best in the judgment of unerring wisdom; to Him who knoweth all things they appeared the best calculated to accomplish the purposes of Divine mercy, in the edification of the saints, and in bringing the world under the benignant influence of the gospel.

It should be remarked, again, that the Christian religion was never designed for one age, for one country, or for one class of men: it is designed and adapted equally for all ages and for all countries,—it is the religion of mankind. Man is, at all times, and in all places, really the same; his moral and spiritual wants are the same; the essential features of his character are the same; the Christian religion, also, in its nature, in its designs and purposes, and in its holy and happy effects, is always the same; so that that ecclesiastical constitution, or system of social religion, which was—not in the judgment of fallible man, but according to the decision of infinite wisdom—really the best

adapted to accomplish the benevolent purposes of the Redeemer in one age, must necessarily be the best adapted to accomplish those purposes in every age of the world, and in every country under heaven.

Besides, the Great Head of the church is not to be considered as legislating for one age, or for one meridian, but for every age and for every clime. It is the declared purpose of Jehovah that "he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth;" that "he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and that of his kingdom there shall be no end." The churches formed, under his superintendence and direction, by the ministry of the apostles, were *designed*, by unerring wisdom and unbounded benevolence, for the adoption of all people in all ages, as best adapted to accomplish the purposes of infinite mercy. The entire scheme of Christianity is not, like all human systems, however excellent, still imperfect, partial in their application, and requiring to be modified by circumstances, and improved by experience: it is a Divine economy, and, like all the works of God, it is perfect. Man, in his folly and presumption, may add to it, but he can never improve it—its simplicity is its glory; in his ignorance and infatuation he may take from it, but in the same degree he mars its beauty, and diminishes its efficiency—its completeness is its strength.

And what claims our homage in opposition to these productions of Divine wisdom? In different countries we have ecclesiastical incorporations by law established, perpetually varying in form, but too much alike in spirit. Without leaving the British dominions, the advocates of establishments, if they would maintain consistency, must change their religion again and again, as they happen to cross certain seas or rivers. These schemes, so dependent on geographical boundaries, are not the emanations of Divine wisdom—its laws and operations are distinguished by their simplicity and their universality; —they are the devices of carnal men. The churches planted in the apostolic age owe their origin to Him by whom "came grace and truth;" for these establishments we are indebted to ambitious priests, crafty politicians, and despotic princes. Can a Christian be at any loss to determine which he shall choose?

IV. I hasten to observe—that *it is the DUTY of every Christian diligently and impartially to examine this subject for himself, and to contribute to the utmost of his ability to the formation of churches after the model of the apostolic age.* It were a most injurious reflection on the oracles of truth, and on the wisdom of God, to suppose either that what he has been pleased to reveal does not deserve the impartial and devout examination of all for whose benefit it has been made known, or that the sacred scriptures are so unintelligible, that it is impossible to ascertain their real meaning. The divisions which exist among Christians seem to cast a serious reflection on the fountains of inspiration, while they are in reality a disgrace to themselves—a disgrace which will continue until men conscientiously endeavour to divest themselves of pre-conceived opinions, until every man feels it a solemn duty, which he owes to himself, to the world, and to his God,

to betake himself, with the simplicity of a little child, and the humility of one who is conscious of his liability to err, and who realizes his dependence on the Divine Spirit, to the oracles of truth, and labours by impartial, persevering, and prayerful attention to ascertain for himself what is the will of God, the mind of the Spirit. It cannot be too deeply deplored that this duty is not more extensively recognised, is not more powerfully felt. During the last five years the country has been deluged with publications on the subject of ecclesiastical reform: amidst the endless variety which they present, there is one point on which they are agreed; that is, that men are to look for the model of a Christian church to their own imaginations, and not to the oracles of God; some confide in the prudence of politicians and the erudition of ecclesiastics; but they all disregard "the wisdom of God:" some refer to canons and councils; but none refer "to the law and to the testimony:" some recommend "the wisdom of our ancestors;" but none inquire, "What saith the scriptures?"

Would that a tithe of the time and attention which even pious minds have misspent on schemes of church reform—schemes which will be realized when all dreams come true—had been devoted to a careful examination of the New Testament, on the subject of the nature and constitution of the church of Christ, and to assiduous preparation of heart, to act in accordance with its decisions! There would, doubtless, have been much less written on the subject of reform; but there would as certainly have been much more done in the way of real improvement. How many estimable men are there, within the pale of our establishment, who are by no means blind to her errors and corruptions, whose consciences are often lacerated by her absurd and unscriptural impositions—who have vainly devoted many hours to devise and inculcate plans of reform, for which their superiors give them no thanks, and which, in moments of serious reflection, they must be aware will never be realized! Would that they inquired "for the old paths, the good way, and walked therein. that they might find rest for their souls!" Then only can the church enjoy peace and prosperity, when Christians betake themselves "to the law and to the testimony," when they fall back on the pure principles of the gospel, when their institutions and habits are moulded by the simple forms, and are animated by the noble spirit, of genuine Christianity.

There are many, it is believed, who continue their connexion with corrupt ecclesiastical bodies, not because they are insensible of their errors and abuses, but because they hope they will be reformed, or because they have opportunities of usefulness in connexion with those societies which they could not enjoy if that connexion were dissolved. "They hope *the church will be reformed.*" But the very nature of things must be changed ere a church, controlled by secular and political men, can be what a church of Christ must be,—a spiritual body. It should be recollected, also, that our responsibility is always in proportion to our power. We are not responsible for the reform of public bodies, over which we have no control; but "every man must give account of himself unto God." He is responsible for

his own conduct—for the light which he enjoys, and for the use which he makes of it.

"They have opportunities of usefulness while they continue their connexion with the church, which they could not have if that connexion were dissolved." But it would require a refined casuistry to point out the difference, in some cases, between this, and doing evil that good may come.

And if this may be urged in the present day, with how much greater propriety might it have been urged in the seventeenth century. Whatever weight attaches to it *now*, *then* it had, at least, a hundred fold more. Had they conformed, Baxter and Howe, and the noble army of confessors who suffered with them, might have continued to preach the gospel, and multitudes would have rejoiced to receive the truth from their lips. By acting in accordance with the dictates of conscience, they submitted to the severest privations and sufferings; they allowed themselves to be clothed with infamy in the eyes of the nation. They endured the agony—what parent will refuse them the tear of affectionate sympathy?—of hearing, often, the imploring accents of their helpless children, who, pinched with hunger, cried for bread, which they would gladly have denied themselves to give them, but had it not to give; of witnessing the tear which often bedewed the mother's cheek, while she endeavoured to hush her almost famished babe to rest; of seeing the people whom they had served, and whom they still loved, scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, and literally "perishing for lack of knowledge," while they were "forbidden to preach to them, that they might be saved." They preferred this accumulation of suffering to the equivocal position of appearing to sanction by their conduct the unrighteous impositions of the hierarchy. And is any man, with the volumes of history and revelation before him, prepared to question the wisdom of their conduct? Under God we owe it to these men that the spirit of freedom lived, and that a sense of religion was maintained among the people of England. Had they belied their consciences, and conformed, the corruption of the nation had been complete; the pure flame of piety, and the precious spark of liberty, had been alike extinguished: licentiousness had been unbounded, uncontrolled; infidelity and irreligion had been rampant, and despotism everywhere triumphant; the tide of the nation's improvement had been rolled back immeasurably; the moral desolation, appalling as it really was, had been still more dreadful; the doom of the country had been sealed, and its destruction inevitable. But by their determination "to obey God rather than men," by the noble stand which they made for conscience and for truth, this small, but hallowed band became the conservators of their country. They were the salt of the earth, and preserved it, in the worst times, from complete corruption. They were the leaven, placed by a benevolent Providence in the midst of the land, and their influence quietly diffused itself until it was felt upon the whole mass of the people. Acting up to the light which was in them, they became a "creative centre" of moral good, —a well-spring of pure water, the fertilizing influence of which the

whole land now enjoys, and is destined to enjoy still more abundantly. These noble men committed one great error; they submitted too quietly to the iniquitous restrictions which the ungodly prelates, and licentious princes, imposed upon them; and thus protracted the period of their sufferings, and delayed the era of the nation's emancipation. They did well, that from motives of expediency they did not conform; but they had done better, had they fully imitated the conduct of the first ambassadors of the cross,—the true models for the Christian minister,—who said to the priests and rulers, when, by threats, and more than threats, of imprisonment and death, they attempted to silence them, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for *we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*" It should have been their solemn and avowed determination that their ministerial existence should terminate only with their natural life; that death alone should seal their lips in silence. Had they thus acted, some of them would, doubtless, have perished sooner than they did; but they would have perished nobly. Such a death would have been honourable, enviable, extensively beneficial; "the blood of the martyrs would have proved the seed of the church;" and this seed would not have remained "buried long" in the earth, but would speedily have sprung up, and brought the fruit of the people's deliverance.

A similar destiny might be realized by some good men in the present day, were they but prepared to act the same part. Many devoted men are found within the pale of corrupt establishments, whose labours are extensively useful; but while they do good, they are the chief means of preserving and perpetuating much evil. Were it not that some good men cling to them with extraordinary blindness and pertinacity, an enlightened people would everywhere throw off those corrupt institutions which are a hinderance to the diffusion of the gospel. If they were to act as a body of enlightened and faithful men, with whom the dictates of conscience, and the requirements of God, are paramount to every consideration, who have no motive but his love, no rule but his law, no end but his glory, how much more powerful and beneficial would be the influence of their example and ministry! They would then be free to follow the truth whithersoever it might lead; their doctrine would be confirmed by their conduct, and both would be alike blessed.

It was remarked, by some of the most intelligent and candid men of that day, that some of those ministers who, though they knew the truth, were induced, by motives of expediency, to comply with the requisitions of the act of uniformity, soon ceased to be what they once were, the ornaments and blessings of the country. Some, whose conduct had been as exemplary as their ministry was scriptural, became careless and positively immoral. A process of deterioration, scarcely less painful, is observable in the present day. The celestial flame of charity has, for some time, lost its brightness in the bosom of the church; on altars where it once seemed ready to blaze, it is now almost extinguished. The foul spirit of sectarianism is again raised, and contaminates whatever it touches; the demon of intolerance stalks

abroad in all its fury, and blasts wherever it breathes. And such is the fearful rapidity with which a course of deterioration is pursued, that it is impossible to calculate what the end will be. Who has not observed, of late, statements of the religious destitution of their parishes, put forth by men who have been respected as ministers of Christ, in which the labours of Christian pastors, no less pious, devoted, disinterested, than themselves, whose flocks are not less numerous, whose efforts are not less successful, than their own, are passed over in entire and studied silence? This is something more than a violation of the law of charity and kindness; it is a melancholy deviation from integrity and truth. Such cases are painful, but they are also instructive; how clearly do they tell us, that he who sacrifices principle to expediency takes the most direct course to sear his conscience, and to ruin his soul!

But the objection still recurs—"they have opportunities of usefulness, while they continue their connexion with the church, which they could not have if that connexion were dissolved." I must remind you, therefore, of the first principle inculcated in this address, that expediency is no rule of conduct for the Christian. Duty is ours; we must leave events in the hands of God. It is for us to ascertain what is right in the sight of God; then we may cheerfully commit our way unto the Lord, and do good, resting assured that he will bring to pass that which is best for us. The advice which I would give with all humility, but at the same time would urge with affectionate earnestness, on every man, is this: Fearlessly act up to the light which God has given you, remembering who has said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;" and "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." You will ever find that "he who walketh uprightly, walketh surely." Hearken at all times to his commandments, and cheerfully keep them; "then shall your peace be as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." Firmly persuaded in your own minds of the purity of your principles, and of the integrity of your heart before God, it matters not what reproaches it may be your lot to endure, or what losses you may be called to sustain. Houses and lands may be taken from you, the dearest friends may forsake you, father and mother may desert you, the ignorant may pity you, and the unprincipled may calumniate and denounce you, the world may "say all manner of evil of you;" but none of these things will move you; "as your day is, your strength shall be." Sustained by his grace, which is always sufficient for us, you will cheerfully "go without the camp, bearing his reproach;" yea, you will "rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake." And whatever you may lose in the service of your Redeemer, you will gain much more. You may lose reputation amongst men; but you will have "the testimony of a good conscience," and "the honour which cometh from God." You may lose friends, affluence, comfort; but "verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting."

Nay, your very losses will turn to gain; your privations will be converted into privileges; your sufferings and sacrifices will be attended with the most beneficial results; they will be a perpetual memorial before your God, and constant blessings on yourself. It will be found far better to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin; the reproach of Christ will prove greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt.

The evangelization of the world is far more closely connected with the restoration of the church to its primitive simplicity and purity than is generally thought. Our Lord has taught us that the world can never be converted until the church be made perfect in one. But it has ever been found that legislative attempts to effect a compulsory uniformity, have broken the church into fragments, have expelled the spirit of charity from her bosom, and have deluged her with the water of strife. Of all sects, the most sectarian are those by law established; the exclusiveness of the English hierarchy, especially when considered in connexion with her absurd pretensions to be the truly catholic, that is, the *universal* and apostolic church, cannot but disgust every man whose heart has ever been the dwelling-place of the sacred spirit of charity. And a proud and sectarian establishment necessarily exerts an equally powerful and pernicious influence on every section of the Christian community by which it is surrounded; while the efforts of the dissentient bodies to effect their deliverance from the oppression of a dominant sect, divide the energies, and exhaust the resources, which should be exclusively devoted to the diffusion of the gospel to the ends of the earth. Reason, enlightened by revelation, approves the conclusion, that that order of ecclesiastical government which appeared to infinite wisdom and goodness the best, must be far better adapted to the great work of evangelizing the world than any which man can devise. And when Christians in general shall adopt for their model the churches of the apostolic age, *because* they were formed by inspired men, it may reasonably be expected, that such reverence for truth, such deference to the authority of the Redeemer, will receive the most unequivocal proofs of the Divine approbation. While we are taxing our ingenuity for plans of ecclesiastical reform, or doing homage to human authority in matters of religion, by quietly submitting to the impositions of fallible and presumptuous men—souls are perishing; and are we sure that "their blood will not be required at our hands"?

Before I conclude, I may be allowed to offer one remark on the spirit in which all our religious inquiries and discussions should be conducted. We are required by the apostle "to speak the truth in love;" a most important injunction, but very frequently misunderstood. Some persons seem to think that this injunction is intended to impose restraint on the freedom of our inquiries, or at least on the expressions of our conscientious convictions respecting the principles and systems which may be advocated by our fellow Christians. But nothing can be more fallacious; it is incumbent on every man to love the truth, to pursue it whithersoever it may lead, to embrace it wherever it may be found, to inculcate it, with freedom, wherever he

may have opportunity, and to defend it with zeal whenever it is attacked. But if we love the truth, we cannot love the errors to which it is opposed; as the truth is important, the errors which are subversive of it must be mischievous; and if we desire that the truth should prevail, we cannot but desire that those errors should be exploded. The legitimate objects of our forbearance, tenderness, and affection, are, not errors, but the persons by whom they are held. The fallacy, the mischievous tendency, of the former, we should endeavour faithfully to expose; but always in a spirit of charity towards the latter. Intolerance is closely allied to ignorance and latitudinarian indifference; but an enlightened conviction of the truth, and a conscientious adherence to it, are intimately connected with a spirit of Christian charity and diffusive benevolence. Charity, my brethren, is the chosen companion, the meet associate, of truth. Indifference to the truth, which is the mind of God, cannot be connected with charity to man, who is the image of God; this Dagon can never dwell in the same temple with the ark of Christian love.

And now, "arise, O Lord, we beseech thee, thou and the ark of thy strength; let thy minister be clothed with salvation, and let thy chosen people shout aloud for joy." Amen.

Mr. Davies then put the usual question to the church, respecting the circumstances which had led to the present service, to which Mr. Dawson answered:—

It is, dear Sir, with much pleasure we reply to your invitation; but before we do so, we shall perhaps be pardoned, if we just glance at our earlier history.

This church was formed on the 17th of September, 1817, by the union in Christian fellowship of thirty-one friends, (but seven of whom now remain), who obtained an honourable dismission from the church in Keppel-street for that purpose. The late respected Dr. Newman gave a very serious and appropriate address on that occasion, at the close of which he compared the efforts of the friends to form a new church, to the lighting up another lamp in this great metropolis, which he hoped would burn with a strong, steady, clear, brilliant, and lasting light to the glory of the Great Head of the Church! and, although it would not become us to apply to our successful attempt each of these expressive epithets, we are very grateful, that, having obtained help of God, this church has, in some humble degree, contributed to enlighten the neighbourhood, and that, with increased prospects of usefulness, it continues until this hour.

The first pastor was the Rev. Wm. Belsher, now the venerable minister of the Baptist church at Greenwich, who would have been here this morning, but for the infirmities of age. Writing to a friend this week, he says, "My hearing is so very imperfect that public services are become quite a blank. I shall not fail to meet you on that occasion at a throne of grace, the common meeting-place of all

God's people." This good man presided over the church for nearly seven years, during which period this freehold chapel was built, and opened on the first Wednesday in the October of 1821, of which, therefore, this first Wednesday in the October of 1836, may almost be considered the anniversary. The congregation declining under that gentleman's ministry, he wisely resigned in 1825.

A trying interval of three years succeeded, during which long period of widowhood the little church found much need of patience and of many other Christian graces; but they were especially sustained by the scriptural exhortation and assurance, "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." Convinced that the formation and preservation of a Christian church is "well doing," they persevered, when, just as a respectable minister had terminated a twelve months' unsuccessful experiment among them, and was only kindly waiting until they could find another supply, Mr. Thomas was sent from the College at Stepney to officiate for that individual, who was suddenly called into the country by domestic affliction.

Two inspiring events now almost simultaneously occurred, to which we always look back with lively gratitude. Mr. Thomas's services not only deeply interested the church, and the small congregation, but induced the settlement of forty-four friends, who had resolved on leaving the church in Eagle-street, and who were accordingly dismissed to us before Mr. Thomas's ordination, which took place in 1828. From that period until so late as April last, Mr. Thomas continued the successful pastor. It was not until the 25th of March last that even the deacons had heard the least intimation that their minister had been invited to leave them; and it was not until the 10th of April that they were prepared to acquaint the church that he was about to visit Monmouthshire, to confer with the committee of the Welsh and English Baptist Education Society, respecting the desirableness of his quitting this station to preside over the Academy about to be removed to Pont-y-pool. The invitation was as unexpected by the pastor as by his people. Nothing could exceed the surprise with which the intelligence was received. Its suddenness seemed to unfit for anything but prayer:—a special prayer-meeting was immediately held, to beg that wisdom profitable to direct might be alike imparted to the pastor, to the committee, and to ourselves. Brother Thomas's return was expected with the anxiety common to mortals in foreboding what they dread. This return was at once followed by a letter of resignation, which was read to the church April 25th. The interval of a week was taken for prayer and deliberation, and on the 2nd of May it was accepted by the following unanimous resolution:—

"That the members of this church accept, with unfeigned sorrow, the resignation of their beloved pastor, the Rev. T. Thomas, and at the same time assure him, that, though his removal produces in their minds the deepest concern, they exonerate him from all blame, feeling assured, from their knowledge of his character, and the regard he bears towards this church, that the invitation he received to become the tutor of the Theological Academy at Abergavenny would have

been refused, had it not been his full conviction that it was the will of the Great Head of the Church that he should adopt the opposite course.

"That in accepting this resignation, the church is desirous of acknowledging the goodness of God in sending his servant among them, and in rendering his ministry so successful.

"That they hereby present to Brother Thomas their sincere acknowledgments for every exertion he has made for the church's prosperity, and the assurance that they shall not soon forget his work of faith and labour of love; they thank him for the promise of his remembrance of them at the throne of grace, and they assure him, it will be to them a pleasure to beg of Almighty God to increase his usefulness, of which they hope to hear from time to time with delight; that while they pray that the best of blessings may descend on him, on the partner of his joys and cares, and on his dear children, they would especially beseech the God of all grace to grant, through the merits of the adorable Redeemer, that it may be vouchsafed to their late pastor and to all who were the people of his charge, to meet in that perfect state where the reasons of the divine proceedings will be more clearly perceived, and their wisdom fully understood."

Brother Thomas was too much affected to appear in the pulpit after his determination to leave—but on the 9th of May he agreed to meet the church and congregation at a public prayer-meeting, at the close of which he delivered his farewell address, when the church presented him with a small token of their love and esteem. Thus terminated a very successful pastorate of nearly eight years,—at a time too, when prospects were flattering, and when extra exertions had commenced for a greater revival of religion amongst us and around us. The pastor had just put into the hands of each of his people a pastoral letter,—a general visitation of the members, with a view to the increase of personal exertion, and individual application to the undecided in the congregation, with the hope of their spiritual benefit, was in prospect—when, suddenly, our minds were called off from these interesting purposes to the business connected with, and consequent on, his departure. But although removed to a sphere of more important labour, he will long live in the affections, and therefore in the remembrance, of the church, and especially in the hearts of the many to whom he was made the instrument of conversion. His uniform integrity, his untiring zeal, his varied labours, and especially his anxiety for the salvation of souls, cannot soon be forgotten. It would, however, be a sufficient eulogy of this indefatigable minister to state, that he found this church with but forty-seven members, but left it with 204,—that he found it with a debt of 1,500*l.*, but left the burthen but 800*l.*—that he found the chapel with but a front gallery, and left it in the enlarged and improved state in which it is now seen, and that without any increase of debt in effecting the improvements.

We have been repeatedly asked, and the question may occur to some friends present, seeing we were so prosperous and happy, why the church did not importune so useful a minister to stay? To which we reply, that the directing hand of Divine Providence seemed to be too

evident to allow us to do so. Brother Thomas had a strong conviction that it was his duty to go. The ministers whom he consulted advised him to go. We knew we were unable justly to balance the claims of the two stations :—of that at Pont-y-pool we knew nothing but from report ; and of the merits of this we were at best but partial judges. It is true, we were well aware of our dear friend's usefulness here, but we held it not only possible, but probable, that he might be even more useful in the principality, able as he is to teach in Welsh as well as in English, and successful as it is likely he may be, (an honour and a privilege often vouchsafed to the devoted teacher,) in imparting of his spirit to his pupils, and infusing into their breasts somewhat of that unquenchable ardour which seemed to us, under God, the principal cause of his success. It was gratifying to us, after Mr. Thomas's departure, to receive from the secretary of the society a copy of the following resolution, unanimously passed at their general meeting: "That the thanks of this meeting be given to the church assembling in Henrietta-street, London, for the very kind and Christian manner in which they have given up their late beloved pastor, at the invitation of the committee, to become the President of this Institution, and beg to assure them, that they would not have urged his removal from a station of so much usefulness, had they not been fully convinced that the providence of God was directing their, and his, attention to a sphere of greater importance to the cause of the Redeemer, and earnestly hope that He who is the head of all things to the church, may soon and efficiently supply that station which has been thus vacated."

We have already stated that Brother Thomas was unable, from the strength of his feelings, to preach after he had resolved to leave, which obliged us to seek supplies before he left London ; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that, in consequence of disappointment on the part of a highly respected senior minister, who was to have preached on the first sabbath of our destitution, our esteemed young friend, about to be ordained, should have entered the pulpit on the very first Sabbath after his predecessor had vacated it. And it is a circumstance still more remarkable, that at this time Brother Thomas, very unexpectedly to us, and without any intimation to the officers, should have addressed a letter to the church, dissuading them from the imprudent plan of hearing many supplies, and directing their attention to Brother Salter, as a suitable successor, which according with the advice of a very respectable and experienced minister to the deacons, induced the church to invite our young friend as a supply for a month, which, after special prayer for Divine direction, was followed by a request that he would undertake a probationary service for three months, with a view to the pastoral office. To this our young friend, after due deliberation, happily assented. It was peculiarly gratifying to the officers of the church to observe, during these introductory labours, an increasing interest manifested on the part of the young, and that there was reason to believe that serious impressions had been made on several youthful minds. With these and other indications of the

Divine approbation, a special meeting was held on the 1st of September, when, after fervent prayer to the Great Head of the Church, a call was given to our beloved young friend to become the pastor of this church, which on the 7th he accepted. Immediate application was made to the church at Camberwell for our brother's dismission, which was readily and affectionately granted; and on Lord's day morning last, Brother Salter received the right hand of fellowship.

We feel, therefore, that we have peculiar cause for gratitude, not only for the prospect of an efficient ministry, but that it was provided for us the very first Sabbath on which it was needed; that with the exception of two Sabbaths spent at Stratford, in consequence of previous engagement, our young friend's labours have proceeded so uninterruptedly and so successfully; that although so unexpectedly and suddenly deprived of our late pastor, no long and anxious interval of destitution has been experienced, but that little more than five months have passed, before our eyes again behold our teacher, whose labours we invite every Christian present to pray may be abundantly blessed.

In reply to the usual questions from Mr. DAVIES, relating to personal experience, reasons for entering the ministry, and views of Christian doctrine, Mr. SALTER made the following statements:—

1. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.—Having been blessed from my earliest years with no common religious advantages, you will not be surprised, Sir, that I have been the subject of convictions so far back as my memory can extend. Those feelings, however, though often powerful, were always transient, leaving me in almost entire regardlessness of my eternal welfare, till some fresh occurrence forced back my attention to the subject. This was my state for many years, till I was induced to become a teacher in a Sunday-school. There, after a little time, my convictions returned with increasing force. I felt that I could not leave the children, whom I was to teach, unacquainted with the truths of the gospel. Even should I perish myself, I was unwilling to incur the additional guilt of neglecting those who were become my charge. Yet whilst I was thus compelled to endeavour to shew to them something of the way of salvation, I could not escape the apprehension suggested by St. Paul's words—"Lest after having taught the gospel to others, I myself should be cast away." Whilst these convictions were still upon my mind, many other circumstances, which it would be tedious to specify at length, contributed to augment their power. The sickness of a friend, religious biography, particularly of Dr. Payson, and Mr. Williams of Kidderminster, a temporary interruption of my usual pursuits affording me time for reflection, and the discourses of my pastor, and of other ministers, were among the means which a gracious and long-suffering God was pleased to employ in winning me back

to himself; and after some months of hesitation, the final decision was made, partly in consequence of a few words dropped by my pastor after an address at the weekly prayer-meeting. I was subsequently led, by the conversation of pious friends, to offer myself for communion with the church at Camberwell, and, being accepted, was baptized and received into their fellowship. Since that time I have, I trust, though with much of sin and infirmity, and many wanderings of heart from God, yet been enabled to persevere, daily learning more of that lesson which is so painful and difficult in the acquirement, but so profitable and delightful in its result, that all my own strength is utter weakness, but the grace of Christ is sufficient for me.

2. Introduction to the Ministry.—At the time, Sir, when I made a profession of religion, I felt a very strong desire, if it might be the will of God, to be employed in his public service. I believed my motives then to be in part such as he would approve, for I felt an anxiety for his glory and for the conversion of sinners to him. Yet I did not know whether they were so pure and so strong as to be likely to sustain me in the duties and trials of the ministerial work. My decision was especially delayed by the fear that it might be made under the influence of the representations of some kind friends who were desirous to see me thus engaged. I cannot now but rejoice that those who knew me best did not join in these attempts, as I might perhaps have yielded at a time when certainly my own mind was far from being suitably prepared. However, after much consideration, and I trust much close self-examination and earnest prayer, I thought I could see that my desire was really the result of devoted love to my Redeemer and to immortal souls. My wishes were communicated to the church, and very kindly encouraged, and I was recommended to enter the college at Stepney, where I remained between two and three years, not, I trust, without great and permanent profit. During that time, I cannot indeed say that there has been no forgetfulness of the great duties which I was anticipating, and no intrusion of a worldly feeling, yet I have reason to believe that, with clearer views of the extent of pastoral duty and responsibility, there has been mercifully granted a growing interest in the Redeemer's cause, and a holier and more fervent desire to be employed, however humbly, in the promotion of his glory. And now, whilst the feelings with which I first devoted myself to his service still appear to me not to be disapproved, yet I would be sincerely thankful that they have had time to gather strength before I entered upon my stated work.

3. Confession of Faith.—Conceiving it, Sir, to be both my right and my duty to judge for myself as to my religious tenets, I have endeavoured, I trust, candidly and sincerely, to discover the truth, and now cheerfully confess before you, and all the friends who are here assembled, the faith which I hold, and which I hope, by the help of God, to be enabled to preach.

From various sources of information, I learn that there is one Supreme, all-perfect Being, who created all things, and now preserves and governs, according to their different natures, the beings that he

made. In his government of man he has been pleased to give us his written Word, containing all things necessary for our direction in duty. From this Word we learn his will, which is found in the law that he gave. That law we have broken, and consequently incurred its condemnation. Our first parents began the transgression, and lost for themselves and their posterity that holiness which they originally possessed. Our defection has thus been universal, so that "there is none that doeth good, no not one." And now the whole race is exposed to eternal death. Yet, in his wonderful mercy, God has been pleased to provide a remedy, and, by a plan the most glorious and admirable, to reconcile the maintenance of his own justice as the Governor, with the restoration of the transgressor to favour and life. This plan the gospel unfolds. In doing so, it reveals to us an incomprehensible distinction in the essence of the Godhead, such as does not interfere with the Divine unity, and declares that one of the three glorious persons took the human nature, in all its sinless infirmities, into union with the divine, and thus becoming known to us as the Son of God, dwelt for some time on earth in obedience to the laws of God, and then died as the victim of our transgressions. By this obedience and expiation, the law was honoured, and the dignity of the divine government preserved unimpaired, at the same time, that the sinner might be reinstated in happiness and holiness. To shew the acceptance of the sacrifice, and to carry forward the application of the work, the illustrious sufferer rose from the grave on the third day, and was exalted to the government of the world. He has now commissioned his servants to offer salvation to all mankind, assuring them that "whosoever believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not must be damned." But, inasmuch as the heart of man is desperately wicked, and it is therefore absolutely certain that all, if left to themselves, will refuse to believe and return to God, the Redeemer is also provided with the gift of the Holy Spirit, whom he bestows upon such as he had before chosen to receive salvation, for reasons, of which all that we know is, that they are in no way founded upon the personal merit of the recipient. The Holy Spirit, in a way to us quite unknown, influences the heart, causing it to receive, with love and gratitude, the truths which it once refused to admit. Having thus led the sinner to a sense of helpless guilt, he brings him to behold Jesus Christ, and, in receiving the offer of his mercy, to rejoice in him as the Saviour of his soul. This work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is denominated by our Lord, in its commencement, the new birth, and the subject of it is said to become a new creature. Being once begun, it is carried on till completed in the perfect holiness of heaven.

The justification of a sinner, I conceive to mean, the treating him as righteous on the ground of what his substitute has done and suffered. Regeneration and sanctification are terms used, I conceive, to specify the commencement and progress of the work of grace in the soul itself; and these, Scripture teaches me, are invariable accompaniments, and so become evidences of justification.

From justification result many and great privileges, which are

summarily mentioned in chap. v. of the Epistle to the Romans:—"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access to this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Corresponding with the privileges are the duties of the Christian. Of these there are two, enjoined by the positive commands of his Lord. Baptism, or the immersion of the body of the believer in water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is ordained, I believe, to be an emblem of Christ's death and resurrection, and of the entire renewal of the heart of the Christian;—the Lord's Supper I conceive to be instituted in order to set before us the sufferings and death of Christ for our sins. These two institutions alone I recognise as of divine and permanent obligation, each and both of them binding upon every Christian; yet I cannot see that either has been made by the declaration of Christ to be necessarily preparatory to the reception of the other.

I further believe, that the Christian, being enabled by the grace of God to persevere, even to the end of life, in faith and obedience, shall be acknowledged by Christ at the day of judgment, and welcomed to the sinless joys of heaven, while all who have been unbelieving and disobedient will be consigned, both soul and body, to that punishment which is denounced.

These, Sir, are very briefly my views of Christian doctrine and duty. On these I desire, by the grace of God, to dwell in my future ministry; endeavouring to give to each part so much prominence as is given to it in the Word of God, that thus the harmony of truth may be preserved, as far as possible, unbroken. Thus I conceive it will become my duty, most of all, to exhibit the cross of Christ; for in it the sinner finds all his hope, the believer all his consolation and all his incitement. Thither I trust I shall ever be enabled to repair myself; and from personal experience of the blessings which flow from it, to direct to it the attention of all who may hear me, delighting often to repeat the words of our Lord's forerunner:—"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

THE CHARGE TO THE MINISTER.

In offering you some advice on this interesting occasion, far be it from me to dictate with a tone of authority. I mean only as one, affectionately solicitous for your honour, comfort, and usefulness, to offer some advice for your assistance in the discharge of that important and arduous office to which your life is devoted, and to the faithful administration of which you have now laid yourself under the most solemn public engagements, in the presence of God and man,—engagements, a pleasing sense of which will, I hope, abide upon your mind, and animate your heart, and influence your conduct, to the

latest day of life. The words to which your attention is directed will be found in Col. iv. 17 :—

" Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."

What Archippus was, but a minister of the gospel, and a fellow-soldier of St. Paul, does not appear. He is supposed to have been discharging the office of presbyter, or bishop, at Colosse. It is by no means certain, nor indeed is it even probable, that his negligence is here tacitly reproved, though it has been generally supposed that he had been inattentive to the duties of his station, and that this language is designed to convey a reproof. Dr. Bloomfield, however, and Macknight, and other commentators, very properly remark, that this is so inconsistent with the commendatory manner in which he is mentioned by the apostle to Philemon, that it surely cannot be admitted. Nor is such a conclusion at all necessary. We might as well suppose, that the admonition to Timothy, to stir up the gift of God in him, implies reproof for negligence. Such language as this is only to be considered as intended to excite to renewed activity,—a caution necessary for every minister, and in every age of the church. The word διακονία is here properly rendered ministry, or office. It is a term often put for the proper service of officers appointed by God for sacred work in his church. The ministry is mentioned as a trust, common to all church-officers, as to its author, end, interest, and some degree of qualifications and duty. This character is applied to extraordinary officers, viz., the apostles. Thus Paul thanks Christ Jesus, who enabled him and put him into the ministry, that is, into the office of an apostle, to be inspired, employed, and assisted as such. It is applied also to evangelists, to one of whom it is said, " Do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of thy ministry." It is applied to deacons, whose peculiar office it is to serve the tables of the sanctuary. Every office in the church of Christ must be appointed by him. What was peculiar to the apostles is above us. What is proper to deacons reaches not our functions, nor are we therein to intermeddle any further than as a higher office may sometimes include a lower. When the canon of the scriptures was finished, when the truth of the gospel was sufficiently confirmed by the gifts and miracles of the Holy Spirit, and as many churches planted as were sufficient for the propagation of Christianity throughout the world, extraordinary officers, as being no longer necessary, ceased in the Christian church. Henceforth it pleased divine wisdom to carry on the work of grace by the standing ministry of the gospel. The persons who are chiefly appointed to this purpose are variously designated. They are pastors of the flock under Christ, the great shepherd; they are stewards of his family ; they are watchmen, teachers, and rulers. Corresponding to these titles they have duties enjoined upon them ; and Christ has commanded the people's regards for them, as acting in such relations. Whoever duly estimates spiritual blessings, will thankfully confess, that when Christ ascended, apostles, prophets, and evangelists, were great blessings, were invaluable gifts to the world, and when these were

removed, that pastors and teachers became most important agents, whose peculiar office it now is to enlarge and to edify the church from age to age. He that desireth the office of a bishop, desireth a good work. His office it is to feed the flock, taking the oversight thereof, to preach the word, to administer the ordinances, to preside in the meetings of the church, and, in connexion with these official duties, to adopt those various means which wisdom and piety may suggest for multiplying the members of the church, and improving them in knowledge, holiness, and comfort, so that they may be established in the truth, may adorn in all things the doctrine of God their Saviour, and may finally become meet for the heavenly state.

My business this morning is, *to give you some counsel respecting the ministerial office, and to present to you some suitable motives for its due fulfilment.*

In surveying your ministerial duties, it is most natural to mention,—

1st, Preaching the gospel. The point, my brother, at which we should aim is, to give to the people a full, fair, and upright representation of the gospel of Christ, of the entire gospel of Christ, unmutilated either by the fear of man or by the love of system. Your endeavour must be to give to every truth in the evangelical system its just weight and proportion. The fault of many preachers is, and my remark applies to the low in sentiment as much as to the high, that they make every text of scripture bend to a pre-conceived system, and thus, instead of speaking according to the oracles of God, they speak according to the oracles of Fuller, of Doddridge, of Booth, or of Gill. I venerate these fathers of the Christian church; I admire their learning, zeal, discrimination, and pious devotedness to the truth; but I bow not to their authority. Nor does it appear to me that a great deference is paid to the word of God, if we imagine that any man can explain the truths of the Bible in terms more accurate, more clear, more powerful, and with greater suitability for information, than God himself has chosen to do in his own word. It is admitted that there is some difficulty on this point, inasmuch as every man takes his own view of Christian truth, and every man's views are more or less biassed by his individual constitution and circumstances; and hence arises the danger of preaching either a defective or a disproportioned Gospel. My brother, there is but one mode of preaching which God has promised to bless, and therefore you need have no difficulty in submitting your preaching to that one rule which the apostle Paul laid down for himself; "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." This must be the cardinal point of your ministry; Christ, and him crucified. All the principles and all the duties of the gospel bear a relation more or less direct to Christ. You need not allegorize the scriptures for the sake of introducing evangelical topics, nor need you confine your pulpit exercises to a few favourite discussions. By so doing, the reflections of that portion of your people whose minds are trained by your preaching, will be always moving in a circle; and instead of building them up in their most holy faith, you will be contracting their minds, and, just in that proportion, enfeebling their piety. You

need not fear to encompass the whole length and breadth of the land. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." You will therefore neither separate doctrines from their influence, nor strip practice of its principles, but you will enforce the obligations and the details of practical religion upon the ground of its relation to Christ. This is in as strict conformity to apostolic practice, as would be the most exquisite exhibition of the sufferings and death of the Saviour. There is nothing less evangelical than the exclusive scheme, the cramping system, that which confines your preaching within the narrow range of a few points in theology. Such a narrow mode of preaching is often adopted with the design of pleasing persons of narrow sentiments and uncharitable feelings; but it dishonours God, and is generally productive of bitter fruits to the preacher himself. On the contrary, my dear brother, if you preach a full and a free gospel, the glad tidings of salvation to perishing sinners, lifting up the cross of Christ, the Son of God, in your ministrations, you may hope to see the stony hearts broken, and the spiritually dead raised to life.

And let me add, concerning the *manner* of your preaching, that your principal care must be to use plainness and simplicity, earnestness and sincerity. You must have no other view, but to instruct and persuade your hearers, conscientiously avoiding all affectation, all aims of gaining applause, or of advancing any temporal interest. If you are actuated by motives which terminate in self, these will diminish the power and influence with which your discourses might otherwise be accompanied. You must preach with such sincerity and earnestness, as shall convince your hearers that you have no other view in speaking, but to stamp on *their* hearts those impressions which are made on your *own*. Your perpetual care it must be, to confine and fix the attention of the hearer to the subject, and not to the speaker, by never suffering, if possible, a single turn of thought or expression to escape you, which has in view merely to please and to shine. All affectation of fine language, every approach to a glittering kind of eloquence, must be regarded with the most profound contempt, as being beneath the man of God, whose office it is, not to amuse the vain and fastidious, but to pluck the brand from the burning by preaching Christ crucified. The grand point, I believe, is, to cherish an inward sense of the importance and excellence of the gospel, and to cultivate in your own mind a strong feeling of those truths which you recommend to others. When your own heart feels the warmth of divine things, it will not be so difficult to transfuse it into the breasts of others. When you are yourself affected by the truths you deliver, "your delivery, it is true, may or may not want the graces of elocution, but it will possess the eloquence of feeling."

I mention,

2dly. That a part of that ministry which you have received of the Lord consists in the proper administration of the ordinances of the New Testament, and in presiding at the meetings of the church.

Of the former of these I shall say nothing more, than that you

take heed that they be done decently, and in order; and, as they are the services of rational and responsible beings, the services of those who have partaken of the grace of God, it becomes you so to administer the ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, that spectators be impressed with their spirituality, and that the recipients, by their holy feelings and obvious profiting, shall seem to address all around, in the language of encouragement and invitation, "Come ye with us and we will do you good."

With regard to presiding at the meetings of the church, you will remember that you are not a lord over God's heritage, nor have you dominion over the people's conduct, but yet you are to rule in the house of God, and see to it that you rule well. You are to rule and to preside according to the word of God, and by, and with, the consent of the church, not as a lord over them, but as a helper of their faith and joy. In the admission of members you are to be faithful and close, but, at the same time, candid and charitable. In the censure or exclusion of members the same fidelity, tenderness, and humility, will be requisite. Let it ever appear that the glory of God, the prosperity of the church, and the real good of the individuals concerned, are your grand and governing motives; and not any private piques, prejudices, or humours, either of your own, or of any of your friends. Let all your affairs be conducted with a spirit of love, and with a view to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

I proceed to mention,

3dly. That another branch of ministerial duty unto which you must take heed, is, the general superintendence of your church and congregation. You have this day solemnly engaged to take the oversight of them in the Lord. A very little reflection will convince you that preaching, though exceedingly important, is far from being the whole of your ministerial duty. Merely to appear in public at stated times, to deliver your sermons, to offer up the prayers, and to administer the ordinances, of the church, and to preside at its meetings, is only a part of that ministry which you have received of the Lord. You are to take heed to the flock over which you are an overseer; you are to watch in all things which may minister to the spiritual improvement and salvation of your people; you are to watch for souls as one that must give an account. You are to be instant in season and out of season, uninterruptedly, and at all times, seizing every favourable opportunity of doing some good, All these terms are employed by the sacred writers in describing the office and duties of a Christian minister.

Your first and most general duty is, to set your people an example of genuine Christianity. This is a ministerial duty, a duty of that ministry which you have received in the Lord. Paul commands Timothy to be an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. He commands Titus to shew himself in all things a pattern of good works; and Peter requires all elders to be ensamples to the flock. All Christians are commanded to let their light shine in the world, but ministers are under a peculiar obligation to it, as especially their

duty. It is not enough that you give no bad example, it is your duty, as a minister, to be to the people a persuasive pattern of piety. In order to this, take heed and see to the reality of your own religion. Piety really prevailing in the heart will naturally lead to good practice; and that it may be exemplary, the proper expression of it must be neither suppressed nor dissembled. Be it yours, my brother, in every situation, openly to avow and prosecute the conduct which the gospel requires. Let your light shine by its own splendour, without either studying to obscure it or endeavouring to render it glaring. Cultivate a religion that shall be transparent as the day. Let your integrity, though inflexible, be free from severity; your humility be free from meanness; your gravity be distinct from moroseness; your cheerfulness from levity, and your zeal be entirely foreign from bitterness. By acting in this manner, you will exhibit an encouraging example of the best qualities which can adorn the soul, and will certainly gain the love, and, in some good degree, the imitation, of your people.

A second branch of this general superintendence is, pastoral visiting. A bishop, says Paul, must be apt to teach. The apostles at Jerusalem, not only daily in the temple, but likewise in every house, ceased not to teach: and Paul appeals to the Ephesians, that during the three years he had lived amongst them, not only publicly, but also from house to house, he had taught them, and shewed them, and kept back nothing that was profitable, and had not ceased to warn every man night and day, with tears. There is no doctrine nor duty, no exhortation nor counsel, no reproof nor consolation, which you administer from the pulpit, but may at times, with ten-fold weight, be enforced within the domestic circle. Whether you visit as a friend or as a pastor, be careful to remember that you are the minister of Christ: and endeavour, as much as possible, never to leave the company of your friends without dropping something that may be useful to them, and that may excite in their minds a savour of spiritual things. Almost every day you will be meeting some or other of your people, whom it will be your duty, with affection and fidelity, to admonish and exhort, to console and encourage, to stir up to the practice of some duty, or to give some plain directions for their conduct. Again and again must you repeat your admonitions and exhortations, trying every method, touching every string, using every topic, till at last you hit on that which carries home to the bosom conviction, conversion, or improvement. The poor, the sick, and the afflicted, must not be overlooked by you in your pastoral visits. Is any sick among you, says the apostle James, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him. Not only sickness, but every kind of affliction, temporal losses, the death of friends or relatives, adversity of every kind—these demand both sympathy and consolation. To weep with those that weep, and, if possible, to comfort them, is a noble employment. Often will you find the time of adversity a favourable opportunity of doing some good to those on whom your past labour may have had but little influence. You need not wait until you are asked. It will be frequently proper, and often exceedingly accept-

able, to go of your own accord to the house of sorrow. You may furnish them with useful materials for meditation in the time of their distress,—hints of advice or consolation, which may shed a beneficial influence on the whole of their future conduct. Take heed, my brother, to execute this office in such a manner as not to lose the advantages which it affords for your own spiritual improvement.

Suffer me to mention one other branch of your pastoral oversight; I mean, the attention which must be paid to the younger part of your congregation. Young persons constitute a considerable part of your audience, and a most interesting portion of your charge. In my opinion, one of the most encouraging signs of the progress of real religion, is that attention which is paid to the young by ministers the most eminent for learning, piety, and ministerial usefulness. Our Lord says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." At what age young persons are capable of understanding the great truths of salvation is a point which depends upon the respective capacities of the youth themselves. It seems to me scarcely possible to begin too soon, Janewary, in his "Token for Children," has recorded many remarkable instances of early knowledge and early piety. There is a remark of the justly celebrated Fenelon, which deserves our attention, because the fact on which it is founded is undeniable, and the deduction from it is important. He says, "That before they are thought capable of receiving any instruction, or the least pains are taken with them, they learn a language. Many children of four years of age can speak their mother-tongue, though not with the same accuracy or grammatical precision, yet with greater readiness and fulness, than most scholars do a foreign language after the study of a whole life." May we not add to this remark, that we ourselves have often observed children at that early period of life, in many instances, discriminating between good and evil, right and wrong. Nay, do they not often seem to know their parents' tempers sooner and better than their parents know theirs, and to avail themselves of that knowledge to obtain their desires? Both nature and the word of God, then, point out the importance of beginning early with the religious instruction of children. But it is not so much to the case of young children that I refer. I refer to the period when they are leaving the Sunday-school, and also to the period when the younger branches of the more respectable families are preparing to enter upon the more serious occupations of life: how important that they should, at that interesting period of life, be brought under the direct attention of, and into immediate contact with, an intelligent, pious, and zealous, minister of the gospel. My brother, if you have not yet begun, I trust that you will, ere long, institute Bible classes, or some other means of equal efficiency, to interest and instruct the rising youth of this congregation. You will soon be amply rewarded for your labour of love. You will soon find one and another of them regarding you as their best earthly friend, and entrusting you with the pious emotions of their souls. One will declare that he is on the Lord's side—another will press forward to the baptismal waters—and another will

join himself to the Lord in the everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure. My brother, may God grant you much success in this and in every other ministerial engagement.

Time forbids my enlarging. I shall therefore notice, very briefly—

Some motives presented in the text for the fulfilment of your ministry. Say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it, and consider,—

1st. That this ministry you have received in the Lord.

Every real Christian is truly dedicated to Christ, but a minister most especially is dedicated to Christ unto the ends for which his office was appointed, and unto the duties it implies. This you profess, and it is a most animating consideration. The words (in Christ) are sometimes an appeal to him, as by an oath; I say, the truth in Christ. You this day appeal to him, in your solemn ordination, as your Lord and Redeemer, whose glory and interest you bind yourself to promote and to make the governing end of your life. It is Christ who has qualified you for ministerial service, for which you owe him your thankful praises. It is he who has counted you faithful, putting you into the ministry; who in his providence has called you to it; and who says to you concerning it, "Occupy, till I come." He, my brother, who is all your salvation and all your hope, who has loved you, and given himself for you, who has manifested himself unto you, as he does not unto the world; He it is who is your great master, and him you are called to serve. You act in his name, and by his authority. It is for his glory that you preach to your fellow-sinners the glad tidings of salvation, for his glory that you rule in the house of God, for his glory that you superintend the concerns of this church and congregation,—that you are called to walk before them in all holiness, to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort, to encourage, to console; to feed the flock, to warn the backsliding, to reclaim those who have wandered out of the way; to sustain the infirm, to instruct the young. All is to be done in the name and authority of Him, who wept, and bled, and died, for you. Let the thought, my brother, enliven and animate you. Let the love of Christ constrain you to take heed to the ministry you have received of him, that you fulfil it. Who would not willingly exert himself in the service of such a master?

2dly. The assistance which is provided for you in this ministry.

Here I might refer, with great propriety, to the sentiments of esteem and affection which fill the minds of all around you, and which this Christian church has so particularly manifested in their unanimous choice of you to take the oversight of them in the Lord. But I refer to an assistance which is provided for you infinitely above the creature, I mean, that which is provided from Heaven.

It is expressly promised that you shall find strength proportioned to the variety and difficulties of your service. You are a fellow-worker with Christ, whose designs cannot be frustrated by all the powers of hell. The special presence of Christ is with you, and this is your surest defence, the richest treasure of light, strength, and comfort, that you can need, or ask. He has all dominion and power, and never can leave his faithful servants unassisted or unrewarded. Is not this

sufficient to encourage you? He has promised, that the influences of his spirit shall sustain, comfort, and bless; and will you be unconcerned? He enabled and accounted you faithful in putting you into the ministry; and will you be unfaithful, when the greatest fidelity is supposed? He has entrusted you with this service, and can you betray this trust? To Him you have devoted yourself, and will you be sacrilegious? To Him you have vowed to fulfil your ministry; take heed, then, of perjury of the worst kind.

Consider,

3d. Lastly, my brother, that if you do not fulfil your ministry in a sincere degree, both you yourself, and many others through your neglect, will eternally perish. To this the unfaithful steward is exposed. Many there are who for want of a faithful ministry will die in their sins. To the unfaithful minister God says, "Their blood will I require at thy hand." Oh! to meet with such in hell, how must it aggravate the torments of the ungodly minister! But, as no thought can be more alarming than that the souls of men should perish through the carelessness of our example, or through the corruptness of our preaching, or through the general inefficiency of our ministry; so, on the other hand, no consideration can be more rejoicing and more triumphant, than that men should be saved by the faithful discharge of that ministry which we have received in the Lord. Oh, consider the value of a soul! The soul of man is the most excellent piece of the divine workmanship in this lower world, far surpassing, in dignity and excellence, the whole fabric of the visible creation; it therefore must be a most glorious employment to promote its worth, its welfare, and its eternal prosperity. It is impossible to conceive a more divine employment than to maintain a command and power over the minds of men by the ministry of the gospel. It is, in some degree, to resemble God himself, the author and giver of every good and perfect gift. To be instrumental in making religion prevail in the hearts and lives of men is an office no less honourable than that of being a fellow-worker with God. It is to be the instrument of God in his grand design of establishing the salvation and happiness of his fallen creature, man. Dwell upon the importance and dignity of the ministry itself, and then lift up your thoughts to the reward of grace, and the everlasting honour, that attends it in the other world. "For they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

THE SERMON TO THE CONGREGATION.

2 Cor. xiii. 11.

"Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

As these admonitions occur at the very close of this epistle, and after the apostle had pronounced a solemn "farewell," they seem to acquire additional force and impression. They express the last and most earnest desires of an affectionate heart and a watchful friendship, forming a valuable summary of religious instruction. St. Paul had reproved with apostolic authority and ministerial faithfulness, the inconsistencies which had obtained in the Corinthian church; but his Christian affection had suffered no abatement: on the contrary, his admonitions were, in reality, proofs of that love, and of his love to Christ. They bespoke a spirit of deep and constant sympathy with that great cause to which he had devoted his existence, and of solicitude for the individual happiness of the professors of the gospel; constituting a kind of reflected light of the benignant spirit of his divine master. Allow me, on this occasion, to adopt and enforce this language upon this now assembled church; and to call your attention to the encouraging promise which the text supplies.

Part I.—The first of this important series of admonitions is brief, but comprehensive—"be perfect." This term in its more general acceptation, as used in Scripture, appears to respect the *motive* and *aim* of Christians. Absolute perfection can belong only to one being, the infinite and eternal God. But in us, sincerity, incorruptness of principle, the reality of repentance, faith, holy love, with their concomitant and associated principles, may be denominated perfection. The state of the heart is of essential importance in all that concerns religion; and the fixed purpose of attaining increasing degrees of Christian excellence, has a moral influence, which is the seed of sanctity, and the effect of grace. This is incipient perfection. If absolute perfection were intended, the exhortation would respect that which is unattainable by finite beings; but if it comprise the holy feeling, and the upward aim, then is it even now practicable, and will continue at once the pursuit and the gain of the regenerated soul for ever,—for pursuing and attaining in everlasting alternations must constitute the felicity of moral and intellectual beings in both worlds.

The scriptural terms which describe religion, partake of this

sentiment. It is represented as a seed which Christ himself, the heavenly sower, first engaged in distributing; a light which is an element of purity and joy, essentially the same in the feebleness of the glow-worm and the fulness of the central luminary, and shines more and more to the perfect day; a leaven, which, like the fermenting infusion in the mass, leaveneth the whole lump; a well of water, which, in the spiritual application of the figure, is said to "spring up into everlasting life."

The word *perfect*, however, appears in this passage to be restricted to a more special and peculiar import. Most terms in language are susceptible of a twofold sense, the original and the applied. Here the circumstances of the case render it at least probable that it is used according to its etymological signification. The Greek original refers to the jointing or fitting the separate parts of a building, or, in another and analogous application, to the adjustment of a dislocation in the members of the body.* The allusion, therefore, is primarily to the state of the Corinthian church, which was much disunited.—"For," said he, "it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you;" and again, "Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"† The apostle expresses his anxiety that harmony should be restored, that each one should exert his most vigorous efforts for this purpose, and that those who had been separated from the communion of the church might be restored, or those who had withdrawn, in consequence of the prevailing contentions, should be reunited. Instead of the limbs or members being out of joint in point of conduct, character, or temper, he was desirous that all should be perfected, and brought into one compacted body of sacred friendship and holy brotherhood. He knew well that divisions and schisms were of a destructive tendency; he inculcated therefore the anti-factious and anti-sectarian spirit. It is honourable to a church, and evinces real excellence of Christian character, if any of its members have been misled and alienated by erroneous views and intestine commotions, to receive admonitions with meekness, become repentant for their irregularities and sins, and promptly return to their feelings of love, union, and co-operation with the general body.

The apostle, in the second place, exhorts the Corinthians to "be of good comfort." Some have combined the three prominent senses

* The word is καταρτίζεσθε, from κατὰ, *intensive*, or *with*, and ἀρτίζω, *to fit, adapt, adjust*, or *complete*. Hence it comes to signify, to refit and repair by reuniting that which is broken. It is applied to the restoration of broken nets, and to the reduction of a disjointed or luxated limb; thence to the reunion of persons divided in sentiment or affection. Macknight renders it, "be ye restored," and observes, "the original word, καταρτίζεσθε, may be translated, *be ye fully restored*,—namely, by repentance and reformation. Beza remarks upon this passage, "the apostle's meaning is, that whereas the members of the church were all, as it were, *dislocated*, and *out of joint*, they should be *joined together* in love; and they should endeavour to make *perfect* what was amiss among them, either in faith or morals."

† 1 Cor. i. 11. and iii. 3.

of the original word,* as the continuators of Poole have done, with much accuracy and wisdom of interpretation. "Be *exhorted* to yield obedience to my precepts or counsels; be *comforted* in all the trials or afflictions you meet with, or may further meet with, for the profession of the gospel; be *confirmed* in the truths and holy ways of God." As, however, in all cases, doubtless, in which a term is susceptible of diversified explanation, and various significations might have been transiently present to the thought of the writer when he employed it, *one* was nevertheless pre-eminent in his mind; so in this passage, our translators appear to have caught the principal idea, and clothed it in appropriate words. There can be no happiness to a church amidst divisions, and there can be no spiritual enjoyment in individual bosoms, when, by disunion of spirit, the indulgence of unholy passions, or a general laxity in our Christian profession, personal religion is in a state of decay and deterioration. It is vain to expect real enjoyment and comfort in a church without mutual affection; and it is equally vain to anticipate personal comfort in religion without sanctification of heart.

Some imagine religion to consist wholly of frames and feelings, or in the persuasions of their own minds; and are, in consequence, perpetually aiming to obtain self-assurances that they are the children of God. This may indeed be a truth, or it may be a delusion; but the fact or the falsehood of the engendered consciousness must depend upon the source of the consolation. It is observable that the apostle first exhorts us to be *perfect*, and then to be comforted: we must not therefore seek for the comfort without the perfection. Let us be careful that the satisfactions we cherish be founded on the eternal principles of truth and the gospel. He who is entitled to derive consolation from personal evidences, or the word of God, must neither be irregular in his conduct, nor factious in his spirit. If a person indulges in pharisaical pride, or sows divisions, he may be assured that if his religion be not entirely factitious, his comfort is at least delusive.

The third advice in this important summary is, "be of one mind."† With slight variations of expression, this exhortation is repeated in other parts of the apostolic epistles. Some commentators have considered it to be an enforcement of Christian love and unanimity, others have applied it to points of doctrine; but the most genuine interpretation appears to be, as Macknight has given it, "that they should set their affections on the same great objects, namely, the glory of God, and the interests of the gospel." In the first chapter of the first epistle, similar sentiments are inculcated in a similar manner: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

* The derivation of the word is παρὰ, *to*, and καλέω, *to call*. Hence to entreat and admonish, or, by advice, to console: and generally, to *confirm* and *comfort*, in whatever manner.

† Τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε, properly, *mind the same*; let there be no dissensions. Wall thinks it should be translated *be unanimous*: but Macknight's opinion appears most correct, that the apostle's meaning is, that they should set their affections on the same great objects. Doddridge renders it, *attend to the same thing*.

that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be *perfectly joined together in the same mind* and in the same judgment."* The Philippians, also, are thus admonished: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, *let us mind the same thing*."† How important is it, my brethren, that we should be continually influenced by this advice! Let the same great object, the common cause of Christianity, engage our attention, anxieties, and prayers. Be *affected* or *interested together* in promoting it; for the advancement of religion, the welfare of the church, and the glory of the Redeemer, constitute the one great object of all holy beings. It has been the theme of prophets, the aim of apostles, the passion of martyrs, the hope of generations, the dread of devils, and the joy of ministering angels. No enterprise can be so noble, and none will be so successful. Every other purpose sinks into insignificance before it, and every opposing scheme or effort must utterly and hopelessly fail. Let, then, all the rivulets of private feeling fall into the great stream of holy union and co-operation. Let your prayers, your exertions, your spirit, and your example, be conjoined in this mighty and glorious project. "Be of one mind" in determining to promote the happiness and prosperity of the Saviour's cause; let every thing be subordinated to it; make it *your* cause; espouse it; sacrifice to it—not the shreds of feeling and the mere fragments of occasional thought or effort—but your prejudices, passions, property, all!

The closing admonition is, "live in peace." At the first perusal this might appear to be a simple reiteration of the preceding advice; but, although comprehensive of previous sentiments, it must be regarded as a more specific enforcement of particular points. As a mere repetition it would represent the profound anxiety of the apostle's mind, and the importance he attached to union and a pacific temper. It respects not merely or so directly the restoration to external compactness and harmony of the dissevered or disjointed members of the Christian community, as its internal character of piety, by which it should manifest "the meekness and gentleness of Christ." A stricter rendering would make the true sense more apparent—"Be peaceable," or rather, "*cultivate peace*."‡ When we consider the differences of constitutional temperament — the clashing of temporal interests—the tendency in every man to see the mote in another's eye, while he overlooks the beam in his own, that is, to magnify defects in others, and to be grossly and even perversely insensible to our personal faults—the difficulty of giving, and the greater difficulty of receiving, reproof aright—it will be apparent that there exists, even in the best ordered Christian communities, a perpetual liability to disturbance and confusion.

In order to be *peaceable*, every one must be willing to make some sacrifices; to be slow to take offence, and quick to receive explanation. The charity which the gospel inculcates "*suffereth long*," "is

* 1 Cor. i. 10. † Phil. iii. 16.

‡ Compare Mark, ix. 50, Rom. xii. 18, and 1 Thes. v. 13.

not easily provoked," and *thinketh* no evil."* The habit of imputing wrong motives to others is detrimental to our own spirit, and slanderous to them; but a pertinacity in repeating charges, even in defiance of the disclaimers of the party suffering accusation, is criminal in the accuser, while it is the fruitful source of that prejudice and ill-will by which the Christian cause itself is not unfrequently injured.

The greatest danger of violating this admonition generally arises from occurrences in themselves insignificant and trifling. "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" A conflagration which, from its fierceness and extent, might appear to be the work of ten thousand men, may arise from a single spark. Were Christian principle in vigorous exercise, it would often, at once and for ever, extinguish a rising resentment, or a kindling dislike, which unsanctified passions, urged by whisperings, backbitings, and suspicions, enflame to fury. It may be difficult or impracticable to arrest the torrent of strife in its full flow of impetuosity, though a finger might at first have been put upon the trickling commencement of the now rapid and ever-widening stream. In my apprehension, the state of society, even of avowedly Christian society, is at present awfully wrong. The elements of discord are working in secret combination, so that there is, I lament to state it, in our own denomination, though not exclusively, much distrust, and little charity. Where is the apostolic spirit? Is it fled to bless, and sanctify, and unite, some happier world? Has the young eaglet, growing in vigour, and stretching forth her talons for the prey, scared the peaceful dove which has ascended to tranquil skies? Where is the mutual, unsuspecting, forgiving, confidence of the members of Christ? Where, Oh! where, among *ministers*, is the love of *apostles*; and where, among *Christians*, is the love of *saints?*

Allow me, dear brethren, to enforce the exhortation to be peaceable by adverting, though with extreme brevity, to the several relations which you sustain to your pastor, to each other, and to the officers denominated deacons, who are peculiarly connected both with the pastor and the church. What does the relation of the Christian community to *the pastor* appear to require? It is obvious that a constant attendance on his ministry is indispensable alike to his comfort and their own profit. Vacant pews, as well as inattentive countenances, have a depressing effect, while the crowded assembly, and the spirit of hearing, stimulate at once intellectual effort and moral feeling. Regularity in religious services on the Sabbath and the weekly assemblies of devotion, in connexion with other indications of Christian character, is a pleasing evidence of stability in a church; and "now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord." Be ever solicitous of perpetuating in the parlour the impressions of the sanctuary; and especially be vigilant that conversation respecting ministerial exercises do not degenerate into periodical criticism, which may extinguish enkindling sentiments of reverence and love to

* 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.

truth in the susceptible minds of children, and the overhearing watchfulness of servants. The contributions of the church and congregation to the support of their minister, may seem to require delicacy in the allusion; and yet I am persuaded that you will receive with due attention the remark, that whatever is intended on this point of importance to his own temporal comfort, should be done with cheerfulness, promptitude, and liberality. It is, however, of far higher importance that there should be a universal co-operation with his benevolent and Christian devices for the promotion of the prosperity of the church, as well as of the general interests of religion in the world. Let there be a responsive sentiment to his own whenever, to advance the peaceable triumphs of the gospel, he shall urge the needful exercise of Christian discipline, and claim a union and energy of action in ministerial and missionary enterprises. Defend his character from unmerited reproach; and let your own manifestations of respect be unmingled with the fulsomeness and folly of adulation. "He that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a snare for his feet." Scarcely is it needful to add, never forget him in your prayers; for the obligation to entreaty for the bestowment of blessings on each other's behalf among the members of the same community, acquires intensity of power by the establishment, for their mutual improvement, of the pastoral relation. Devotion must draw from the celestial heights the mighty energies that shall expand his heart, enlarge his views, and sanctify his efforts.

Sustaining, as you do, brethren, important relations to *each other*, the exhortation to "be peaceable," by indefatigably and invariably aiming at this attainment, is appropriate and impressive. For this purpose, cultivate humility, and avoid a disputatious spirit, that is, a spirit of contention about technical terms and doctrinal shadows. Ten thousand leaves in the natural world may differ, every one from every other, in some points of shape and texture, and yet all constitute the beautiful foliage of one parent tree; and the shape of our system, or the texture of our minds, may be incalculably diverse in their minuter modifications, while essentially united in a radical identity. Avoid jealousies, envyings, and tale-bearing. Be of a forgiving temper, and beware of a worldly spirit. And, finally, enable your pastor, by your conduct, to speak with unreserved boldness and fidelity respecting the holy effects of the gospel. There cannot be a more powerful and prejudicial check imposed upon the fervent appeals of the pulpit on behalf of Christianity from its practical influence, than the inconsistencies of its professors. If, when insisting upon its claims on account of its moral power, as well as its external evidence, the preacher, at the moment of his soul-penetrating argument with some sceptic or worldling before him, glances at a member of his church, of whom he "stands in doubt," as the apostle expresses it, and with whose want of consistency and unimpeachable principle he, and the very hearer he is aiming to impress, is acquainted in the common intercourse of life, his dauntless spirit quails, his energy is enfeebled, and his lively hope of success fails. Consistency in professors is a citadel of defence against the assaults of infidelity, and

a vantage ground of attack upon its proud pretensions. Let the enemies of the cross of Christ, who frequently will not take the trouble, however momentous the question at issue, to read our books, be instructed and impressed in the easier task of reading our lives. If they, indolently or wittingly, stand aloof from the processes of thought, and the involutions of argument, compel them to see the glory of religion in the manifest transformation of character it accomplishes.—"Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify God with their body and spirit, which are his."

The peace and prosperity of a Christian community may be eminently promoted by the conduct of its *deacons;* and, on the other hand, its welfare and progress impeded by their injudiciousness or inefficiency. These officers stand in a very important relation, both to the pastor and the church. The qualifications represented by the apostle (1 Tim. iii.) as essential to the due discharge of their important trust, shew that the diaconal office was not intended to be restricted to the "serving of tables." Upon them will depend much of the comfort and usefulness of a minister, especially of a young minister, in a large metropolis; and their influence must necessarily be powerful on the body of Christians with whom they are associated. The duties devolving upon them may be comprised, generally, in the following summary:*—

1. Co-operation with the *pastor* in all his plans and devices of Christian benevolence.

2. Co-operation with the *people* in their efforts for Christ; in prayer-meetings, in contributions, in missionary enterprises.

3. Care to promote love and suppress faction; of which the naturally extensive intercourse of deacons with the members of a church furnishes ample opportunity.

4. Assistance of the pastor in endeavouring to enlarge the church, by encouraging, instructing, and leading inquirers in the paths of knowledge, faith and decision.

5. Aiding in the exercise of discipline, and in upholding ministerial influence at church meetings.

6. Promoting the cause by engaging others in the various departments of Christian enterprise, and avoiding the exclusiveness of office.

7. Visiting the sick and providing for the poor.

8. Punctuality in attending upon all the services of religion appointed by the church; and, when multiplied engagements occasion an inevitable irregularity, arranging a scheme of successive attendance.

9. Assiduously watching over, and affectionately, yet boldly maintaining, the *character* both of the church and the pastor, should either be unjustly assailed.

10. Aiming at the infusion of an anti-sectarian spirit.

* Since the delivery of this discourse the author has been called to give an address to deacons at an ordination in the country. Instead of a separate publication of that address, as was requested, he has preferred combining here, in one general outline, the sketch of what was delivered on both occasions.

Part II.—The important admonitions of the apostle, which have engaged our attention, are sustained and enforced by an encouraging promise:—"And the God of love and peace shall be with you." The designation of the blessed God as "the God of love and peace," is peculiarly appropriate in this connexion. When discords and divisions pervade a Christian community, it becomes a solemn consideration, that as God is "the God of love and peace," it is the express condition of his gracious presence among them, that they should be "of one mind" and "live in peace." The implication is, that he will withhold his presence if schisms prevail. We must be united in order to be blessed; for the divine Spirit departs from the abodes of discord and division.

It is obvious that the perfection of Christianity consists in assimilation to God, that is, in the exercise of a spirit of love and peace. The epistles of John are devoted to this important subject, and contain one continued paraphrase upon the Saviour's declaration:—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." * Hence the urgent exhortation to the Ephesians—"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."† That love is the essential nature of God, and that he is emphatically "the God of love and peace," has been evinced in the mission of his Son to effectuate our restoration to happiness, and elevation to heaven; so that the tendency of this merciful dispensation should be, to harmonize all discordances, to combine all hearts, and to unite both worlds. And thus Calvary, where, in the blood of atonement, the purifying fountain was opened for sin and uncleanliness, becomes the place of meeting, and the point of association for all the congregated elements of universal peace.

No sacrifices can be deemed too great, no efforts too strenuous, to secure the presence of the God of love and peace. How happy must be that Christian church, and how holy, where this constant indwelling of Deity is realized! What sacred tranquillity will be felt! What a hush of turbulent passions! What confiding and consoling fellowship and intercommunion! What mutual love! What purity, joy, and success!

Do you ask for particular specifications as an encouragement to the cultivation of this moral excellence? Would you, my brethren, wish for some brief delineation of the practical benefits likely to be attendant upon the gracious manifestations of an ever-present God, as the result of an *attracting* conduct and spirit?

1. If "the God of love and peace" be with you, the spiritual prosperity of the church will be promoted. His presence is not now, as during the Mosaic economy, attested by outward symbols, but by inward sanctity—not by Sinai's blazing mount, or Horeb's burning

* John, xiii. 35. † Ephesians, iv. 31, 32.

bush, but by the multiplication or the vigour of Christian graces. The external increase of religion may be sometimes, but is by no means uniformly, indicative of real prosperity; for while the borders are extended, the power within, the moral and holy energy of individual piety, may be enfeebled. The enlargement of a cause may arise out of adventitious circumstances, though we would be far from discouraging the expectation that the divine blessing will accompany a diligent and prayerful use of means for the accession of numbers to a Christian community; but that success, which is essentially valuable and permanent, whether upon a more limited or a wider scale of outward expansion, is to be sought in the intensity of religion itself—in the purity of principle, the depth of feeling, and the energy of love. The presence of God will be characterized by this tendency to a consummation so devoutly to be wished: for that presence is not to be regarded solely as an omniscient observance and approbation of a church, but as an impartation of those influences of the Holy Spirit, which invigorate, and sanctify, and save. Let your prosperity, then, be sought and recognised in this manifestation and power of religion.

2. If "the God of love and peace" be with you, the trials of the church will be greatly sanctified. The gospel dispensation does not assure us, either as individuals or collective bodies of Christians, of an exemption from affliction; on the contrary, it is a necessary constituent of our present state of probation. It is true that sorrow and suffering may frequently appear to originate from ourselves, rather than from any direct external infliction from the hand of God; but in either case they form a part of the divine economy, and subserve the high purposes of moral amelioration. Those events which might, under other circumstances, be deemed disastrous, such as the decease or removal of pastors, with the latter of which you have been recently exercised, are made to co-operate for good; and the church, like the oak shaken by the tempest, acquires increased stability. When the divine blessing and presence are experienced, the virtues which adorn Christianity expand, while its consolations abound; for our Father in heaven can assuage every grief, guide in every perplexity, and sustain in every labour.

3. If "the God of love and peace" be with you, the duty of the church in particular cases will be rendered obvious. In the existence of a spirit of dependence on divine wisdom, and the prevalence of earnest solicitation for indications of the will of God, we possess tokens of his presence, and the appearance of the pillar of cloud. The desire to know the path of duty removes obscurities, and promptitude to pursue it *reveals* that path; so that holy love to God spreads around the Christian pilgrim and the Christian church its own atmosphere of light. The internal arrangements of a body of believers often involve considerable delicacy and difficulty, such as the choice of a pastor, the election of deacons, the support of important institutions, the formation of schemes and systematizing operations of general usefulness, in which the filling up of departments of labour by the most suitable individuals is concerned; but these will

be easily adjusted when the God of love and peace is graciously present. Then will ambitious desires be repressed, and emotions of jealousy, pride, and envy, subside. There will be a concurrence of feeling, and a co-operation of effort, with the general body, and selfishness will melt away in the flow of benevolent sentiment and universal good-will.

4. If "the God of love and peace" be with you, the attractive character and growing influence of the Christian church upon the surrounding world will become apparent. It will resemble a light on a hill which cannot be hid; and the light will be at once diffusive and benignant. The influence of Christian truth is far from being limited, as has too frequently been imagined, to the labours of the pulpit or the official man—it takes a wider range, and spreads over a greater surface. Preaching is unquestionably the most important instrument of propagating the gospel, for to this end it is adapted by divine wisdom, and for this purpose it is clothed with divine power; it demolishes the strongholds of iniquity, and leads captive the enemies of truth; yet is the *Christian church itself*, as a whole, an eminent coadjutor in this important service. It is the conduct of individual members that penetrates the darkness of the world every day, and carries the light and the glory of practical piety into the family, the social circle, and the mart of traffic. It is, besides, from the church of God that labourers, and the only qualified labourers, can be sent forth to evangelize the earth. Their principles, their holy zeal, and their sacred enterprise of spirit, are produced in the church, where the voice that calls them is heard, and the hand that moulds them is employed. It is the dwelling of the divine energy there that imparts to men and to principles all their power, and, in despite of the contempt, the ridicule, and the persecution of mankind, the church has been the centre of all the holy influence that has regenerated and saved the world. Let but this blessed presence and power be experienced here, and darkness must flee, religion must extend, and Satan must be vanquished!

5. If "the God of love and peace" be with you, you will have growing evidences of your progressive meetness for the inheritance above, of a blissful and everlasting association there. Nothing can be more joyous than the hope of that state where we shall meet the congregated children of redeeming mercy brought from the realms of apostacy and darkness into the radiant light and glory of heaven, perfected and united for ever; and nothing more cheering than the internal consciousness, arising from the sanctified energy of truth in our own hearts, and the enstamped image of God in the soul, of being in a condition of progress and preparation for that inconceivable blessedness. But the presence of God, that is, the divine energy in his church, accomplishes this moral meetness; so that amidst the felicities of personal and religious intercourse which the members of a Christian community are privileged to participate here below, how animating, how elevating, becomes the thought, which springs and burns within, as spirituality of character acquires an intenser power, of the reunion of departed and ever-departing friends, brethren, and fellow members, in the church above! To that great confluence of

all holy souls may we daily aspire and evidently tend! There shall the faithful pastor find again his beloved and scattered flock,—their mutual recollections revived, their sacred sympathies renewed, their frequent fears and misgivings annihilated, their faith brightened into light, and their hope merged in immeasurable joy. "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

THE END.

T. C. Savill, Printer, 107, St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross.

from the Author

AN ANCIENT DISCIPLE.

A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY

OF THE LATE

JOHN TREACHER, Esq.

AND ALSO TO THAT OF HIS FATHER,

THE REV. BENJAMIN TREACHER;

CONTAINED IN A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 30, 1838, AT

WORSHIP STREET CHAPEL, FINSBURY SQUARE:

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED, THE

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT MR. TREACHER'S INTERMENT.

BY BENJAMIN MARDON, M.A.

"I always had, I bless God, ever since I began to understand, or think to any purpose, large and generous principles; and there never was any thing, either in my temper or education, which might incline me to narrowness and bigotry. And I am heartily glad of this opportunity which now offers itself of making this public serious profession,—that I value those who are of different persuasions from me more than those who agree with me in sentiment, if they are more serious, sober, and charitable."—DR. JAMES FOSTER.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY COMPTON AND RITCHIE,

MIDDLE STREET, CLOTH FAIR.

1838.

TO THE

FORTY-TWO GRANDCHILDREN

OF THE LATE

Mr. TREACHER,

WHOSE WELFARE HE CONTEMPLATED WITH THE EYE OF THE PATRIARCH AND THE BENEVOLENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN,

DEVOUTLY PRAYING TO THE FATHER OF ALL GOOD, THAT HE WOULD GUIDE THEM BY HIS COUNSEL, AND GRANT THEM WISDOM TO IMITATE ALL THAT WAS EXCELLENT IN THEIR PROGENITOR,

THESE SHEETS ARE INSCRIBED BY

THEIR SINCERE WELL-WISHER,

THE AUTHOR.

A TRIBUTE, &c.

ACTS XXI. 16, "AN OLD DISCIPLE."

I FIND the words thus explained by one of the best critical authorities*, "a veteran Christian, who had already long given his name to the Christian religion." And I know of no words of Scripture more appropriate to our departed friend, a just esteem to whom, I believe, has called many of you together.

I had intended to preface what was of an historical or personal nature in this discourse by an illustration of some gospel narrative bearing on the sublime doctrine of a future life, and by setting forth the value of the Gospel, which gives us the ample evidence and the clear display of that doctrine. But I have found the incidents, interesting to myself, which I am anxious to produce, so numerous, and growing so much in the course of my preparation, that I have determined, without farther introduction,—in

* Schleüsner, in his valuable Lexicon to the New Testament, under αρχαιος.

which, indeed, I could scarcely have done more than re-state arguments or facts already perfectly familiar to most of my hearers,—to proceed at once to what we shall all feel to have the peculiar interest at this time of our assembling.

The late Mr. Treacher, whose life it has pleased Divine Providence to lengthen out to the protracted period of eighty-three years, was born in London, in the year 1755. His father, the Rev. Benjamin Treacher, was a native of Chesham, a small town situated in a fertile valley in the neighbouring county of Buckingham, and about twenty-nine miles from London, remarkable for being but a few miles distant from that part of the country which is so much adorned by nature, and no less celebrated for its connexion with the family and fortune of the great Hampden*; nay, that part of Buckinghamshire seems to have been at different times the residence of Milton†.

Mr. Benjamin Treacher, trained in this peaceful and beautiful retirement, was, probably (but of this we have no certain information), brought up in a society of General Baptists; at any rate, we find him at an early age engaging in the religious services of that denomination of Christians in his native town;

* See Lord Nugent's highly interesting "Memorials of Hampden."

† His father resided at Horton, and the son with him, upon his leaving the University. At a subsequent period of his life, he took refuge at Chalfont, during the prevalence of the plague in London.

uniting, according to a common custom of that class of Dissenters, some branch of trade with the occupations of the ministry. He appears to have early left his native town for this metropolis, influenced either by a desire of further improvement and advancement in his trade, or, at any rate in part, by a desire to have a more extensive view of the religious societies of the metropolis, and to enjoy the advantages of intercourse with some of those able and accomplished men who at that time adorned his own communion. If we suppose that he removed to London about the year 1743, i. e. when he was twenty-one years of age (and the brief notice by which I am guided* says that he soon went to London after he had begun to preach, and that he began to preach at "a very early age"), he would easily gain access to one of the greatest preachers and best defenders of Christianity resident in that city;—I mean the celebrated Dr. James Foster, who was at that time in the full exercise of his comprehensive powers of mind, and most graceful and powerful elocution; attracting to his pulpit services, in considerable numbers, the wits and the philosophers of the day. I judge, from the general correspondence of Mr. Treacher's train of thought with that of Dr. Foster,

* See a short notice of his father, by the late Mr. Treacher, communicated to the Editor of the "Unitarian Baptist Advocate," vol. i, p. 270.

that some intercourse did exist between them. Soon after the ill-fated year 1745, and Dr. Foster's professional attendance upon the Earl of Kilmarnock on the scaffold, as the strength of Dr. Foster's mind gave way, the opportunities of that intercourse would cease ; but still there would remain those four volumes of noble Sermons, which are a durable monument of Foster's enlarged views, Christian candour, and sterling sense.

It was in the year 1754 that a small tract was published by Mr. Benjamin Treacher, on which I must be allowed to dwell a little, trusting that the pertinence of my observations to the general subject may appear as we proceed. Dr. James Foster died in 1753, the year *before* the date of this tract. Its title is, "A Dissertation on the Moral Perfections of the Supreme Being; wherein the Opinion of the late Bishop Beveridge is particularly considered and refuted." It is accompanied by this motto, from a noble author: "If we have never settled with ourselves any notions of what is *morally excellent*, or if we cannot trust to that reason which tells us that nothing besides what is *so* can have place in the Deity, we can neither trust to any thing which others relate of him, or which he himself reveals to us." The immediate occasion of this tract does not appear. The posthumous work of Bp. Beveridge, to which reference is made, had been before the public for more than forty years. It is not impossible that

some one of Mr. Treacher's friends, or occasional hearers (for he continued to officiate as opportunity served), might have taken up the notions of Bp. Beveridge, justly deemed by him subversive of just notions of the moral rectitude of the Divine Being. It is more to the purpose to observe, from a comparison of dates, that the publication of this tract seems to have led to Mr. Treacher's connexion with the Glass-House Yard Church as its minister. This church is known to be one of those in the metropolis endowed by the judicious liberality of a religious person, a native of Cornwall, who lived at the end of the seventeenth century. The previous minister of that congregation* died in June 1755, after an illness of some months; and it appears to me to argue great good sense in the electors that they chose (in the year 1757) a person of so reflecting and accurate a turn of mind to be the successor of Mr. Morris. I have heard the late Mr. Treacher say, that his father received no education expressly with a view to the ministry; but I am led to remark, that cases sometimes occur, in which, by the force of natural talents, the operation of which might in this instance be assisted by the person from whom he

* The Rev. Joseph Morris, a person of excellent education and eminent theological attainments. His friendship with the acute and elegant Jortin is mentioned by Dr. Evans, Tracts, p. 177. We are indebted to Mr. Morris for two volumes of very sensible and useful sermons, many of them turning on the objections of unbelievers to revealed religion.

received the rudiments of general education, whether the minister of the society at Chesham or not, at any rate, improved and exercised by his own meditation and study,—an effect is produced which is in vain sought for in those who have enjoyed the regular administration of knowledge by the ordinary processes of education. I shall dismiss the subject of Mr. Treacher's Tract, the insertion of which in the "*Advocate,*" at the end of last year, I am happy to know was gratifying to our late friend, as well as acceptable to its readers generally, by expressing my opinion that it exhibits the writer, at thirty-two years of age, in the possession of very considerable refinement of thought and expression, of the justest views concerning the perfections and providence of God, and the scheme of revealed religion generally; and which convinces me that he must have enjoyed some advantages for personal improvement, perhaps, by the more ready access to books as well as ministers after his removal to London, of which we are not accurately informed.

The Rev. Benjamin Treacher continued to be the minister of this Baptist church from his appointment in 1757 till his death, which happened in 1766,* during the latter part of which time his congrega-

* The Rev. B. Treacher was connected by marriage with the family of Richard Dendy, Esq., of Tower Hill, near Horsham. The lady, his eldest daughter, long survived her excellent partner, and died at Stamford.—What I have said in the Discourse, in

tion had removed their meetings from Goswell-street to Southwark, which occasioned his interment to be in that part of the metropolis. Some changes afterwards taking place in the burying-ground where the remains were first deposited, they were subsequently removed to Worship-street, and now lie in the same sepulchre with the remains of that faithful and respectful son, over whose recent bier we weep the tears of genuine amity and fond endearment.

I much regret that no manuscripts of so sensible a minister as Mr. Treacher have been preserved in his family; a fact accounted for to me by the circumstance that our late friend had at his father's death an *elder* brother, into whose possession they are thought to have come, and that with him they have probably perished. It is not unlikely, however, from his habit of preaching from short notes, using a small Bible, he may not have left behind him any fully-written discourses. I can have no doubt that very useful and pious impressions were made upon the minds of his auditory (small, probably, during the whole period of his ministry), and that he effectually preserved them from the popular delusions, and established them in the principles of pure and undefiled religion. Soon after the death of Mr.

commendation of this worthy minister, is amply confirmed to me by the strain of high panegyric conveyed in two Elegies written on occasion of his death, one of them by a young lady, Miss Rolt, who afterwards became the wife of Bonnycastle.

Treacher it was that the dissolution of the Barbican Church, and the absorption of the remaining members of the Barbican Church into the Glass-House Yard Church took place. The Rev. Daniel Noble was the minister of the United Society, and was, as the majority of my hearers probably know, the first minister of the chapel in which we are now assembled—our congregation being the direct successor of *that* which Morris and Treacher presided over in Goswell-street, and *also of the Barbican,* founded by Gosnold, the ejected clergyman, and to which Dr. Foster ministered upon his coming to London, from the west of England, in 1724.

It was while yet the *United Society* met in the chapel, Paul's Alley, Barbican, that two events occurred which lead me directly to the life and character of the late Mr. John Treacher, father to several of my audience, and progenitor to a much larger number. These two events are, the admission of Mr. Treacher to church membership, and his entering on the marriage state. Our church book records, that, on May 2d, 1773, our late respected friend being then eighteen years of age, submitted to baptism at the Barbican, where was the principal baptistery in London, resorted to, it is believed, by Baptists of all classes. It is interesting to add that Mr. Bonnycastle, whose name, as afterwards connected with science, is well known, was baptized at the same time, and became a member of our church; and I think I am correct

in adding, that the late Mr. Sturch*, so highly useful and respected throughout his long and recently-closed life, commenced his religious course at the same time: he also was the son of a General Baptist minister at Newport, Isle of Wight. There is no doubt with me that our friend's submission to this rite, and adoption of the view of believers' baptism rather than that of babe baptism or sprinkling, which generally prevails, was the result of good sense and attentive consideration. The circumstance of its being his father's profession, and that of the church in which he had been brought up, may reasonably have directed his serious attention to the subject. His tutor and pastor, Mr. Noble, may fitly have prepared the way by his instructions on the evidences of Christianity; for it is clear that an examination of these ought to precede all profession of our religion; and yet there would be room enough left for the full exercise of individual thought and personal determination. There can be as little doubt that, from the time of this avowal of his faith in Christ, our friend would regard himself as pledged to attend seriously to the requisitions of the Gospel, so far as he understood them, and that he would

* This gentleman, it is believed, attended for some time after this the services of the Rev. Dr. Jeffries, who also removed with his church to Worship-street Chapel upon its first erection. He held in conjunction with his ministerial charge the honourable office of Professor of Civil Law at the Gresham College. He died suddenly, on his return from Mr. Noble's funeral, Dec. 23, 1783.

deem himself under a lasting obligation to promote the extension of Christ's kingdom upon earth. May we not safely argue the depth of an impression which continued with him, guiding him in his actions, leading, supporting, and cheering him in the Christian course through the long space of sixty-five years?

I have had another occasion of stating the fact*, that Mr. Treacher's marriage took place while he attended the religious services of Mr. Noble at the Barbican, and that his conjugal partner was spared to him till the year 1834, when it was my mournful duty to perform the funeral rites also in the adjoining cemetery. Others know full well with what respectful deference and Christian harmony the two chosen partners lived together; I can attest the evident respect and esteem which was exhibited by the aged survivor, then verging "on fourscore years," and his amiable desire to place in the hands of his numerous relatives what he deemed a faithful representation of his consort's character.

It must be regarded as a convincing proof of the estimation in which our late friend was held, that he was entrusted with the most important offices belonging to this Society, or with which it is immediately connected; I mean, of course, offices of a pecuniary nature. He was Treasurer to the Congregation; Treasurer to the General Baptist Fund,

* "Consolations derived from a Life of Piety and Virtue, a Discourse on the Death of Mrs. Treacher," page 15.

established in 1726 to promote education for the ministry, and to assist poor ministers; and also Treasurer to the important trust of Captain Peirce John, by which several Baptist churches of the metropolis are mainly supported*. In all these important and trusty offices our friend was established at the time of my own call to the ministry of this congregation. I can remember, in reference to two of them, where I had personal evidence, and can most readily believe it of others, how holily and unblamably and assiduously he discharged the duties which his office required him to perform. And it was not till the great advance of age, and the warning furnished him by the removal of his conjugal partner, that he thought of resigning the principal trusts into the hands of another, his present worthy successor. I have myself perceived the care, the judgment, I might say the *anxiety*, which Mr. Treacher evinced at the proper time to relinquish those trusts, that they might still continue to be administered in conformity to the liberal spirit in which they have *ever* been executed; and I devoutly pray that men may never be wanting who shall imbibe the same spirit, and sustain, as long as Providence intends that *dissent* shall last, the same important cause.

During the interval which has followed this relin-

* He was also Treasurer of the Education Society, founded with a view to the training of students for the Christian ministry, from its origin, soon after Dr. Evans' settlement in London, till about the year 1828.

quishment of public duty, as we may call it (he had given up trade since the year 1820), our friend had lived in much retirement, especially, I believe, during the more inclement season of the year. *Seldom* did he absent himself from the house of God, though his habitual asthmatic complaint, which has at last laid him low, obliged him strictly to confine himself to the room during the whole of the week beside. I have visited him on such occasions, and have been struck on observing his quiet, collected, prepared manner; as if his mind had been occupied in his solitude by those momentous topics deeply interesting to every man, but which must force themselves with peculiar earnestness on the attention of those who have even by several years passed the assigned scriptural limit of threescore years and ten.

I have hitherto occupied your attention, my friends, with historical and biographical incidents, naturally interesting to some of my hearers, and I hope heard patiently by all. I shall think it proper now to sketch some features in the *character* of our deceased friend during a period approaching to eleven years, since I first sustained to him the relation of pastor; and in doing this I shall scrupulously avoid every word of direct panegyric. I feel that, if my sketch possess any value at all, it must be derived from its *truth*. I shall not wish it to be understood that I mean to represent our late friend as free from all defects. Whether any very serious

defects may have belonged to him is unknown to me; they have not shewn themselves to me in the comparatively little intercourse which I have been able to enjoy with him. But if any such *were* known to me, I should think that Christian charity would throw a veil over them, and prevent his weaknesses from being exposed to his frail fellow-creatures here assembled.

The first feature in our friend's character which I notice was his *quietness* and *unobtrusiveness*. How much of this might have been acquired in advanced life, I have not the means of knowing; it would, of course, be vain to expect at that season either the fire or the vigour of earlier stages of existence. This quietness was opposed to a desire of courting publicity. While some of his early associates and friends, men of different temperament, but no more benevolent than he, courted the most public stations, and performed the most public duties, our friend, though his success in life and even the strength of his mind might have enabled him to rival and even to equal them, chose the shady recesses of life, and to execute those duties which could be performed in private, the importance of which duties satisfied him that he was justified in remaining in that chosen seclusion, by no means an inactive, far less a slothful servant. All who have made human nature and the human constitution their peculiar study, must

have seen how various are the natural qualifications and dispositions of men; and we here perceive an illustration of this truth*.

Another quality of mind which has struck me in our late friend was his *firmness;* his firmness I mean in reference to *religion,* because in that alone I have had occasion to notice it. I can imagine the Apostle *Paul himself* acknowledging in him the character which he has so energetically expressed in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, "*being steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;*" (and I believe him to have been animated by the motive which the Apostle pointed out as leading to the formation of that character) "forasmuch as ye know that your labour will not finally be in vain in the Lord." I ground his firmness and perseverance on the long period of his connexion with this society in circumstances which must have been any thing but attractive to a person of his property and family connexions. The death of Mr. Noble in 1783, or some part of the interval between that and the election of Dr. Evans in 1791, might have furnished him with an opportunity of withdrawing: *but he did not withdraw.* From 1791, till

* Mr. Treacher, it seems, was, for a space of about twenty years, a member of the Common Council of London; and, although he unquestionably gave his votes conscientiously (his politics were those called *liberal*), yet he appears to have taken no prominent part whatever.

the death of Dr. Evans in 1827, I can believe that the friendship which the pastor expressed for our deceased friend was reciprocal*, and that this would bind him to the small flock.

Shall we say that twelve years ago our friend was so far advanced in the journey of life, that the idea of any new religious connexion was not likely then to be entertained by him? Yet let it be remembered that at that time he had withdrawn from trade; that he had removed his residence several miles from the Chapel; and that that tie was still unbroken, which might, at any of the preceding stages of his married life, have been expected, but for his *firmness* (I speak it with perfect respect) to lead him from our connexion, and from every connexion of Dissenters to the Established Church. That Church is the Government Church,—the church of the aristocracy. It is a wonder that one rich man in the kingdom (unless he happen to have very particularly investigated the subject of religion) should belong to any other. In every age since dissent began, the Established Church has been the natural receiver of the rich, the fashionable, the aspiring, the majority of the learned, on account of the splendid and richly-endowed Universities which, even to this hour, the

* See the Dedication of Dr. Evans' Tracts and Sermons, &c., an 8vo volume, published in 1825, and inscribed to Mr. Treacher himself, pp. v-vi.

monopolists seem determined to keep to themselves; and, lastly, the Established Church seems the suitable place for all Indifferentists, and for those who wish to make a profession of religion while they believe not its doctrines; to whom, of course, Thirty-nine Articles, or Three hundred and ninety-nine Articles, are perfectly the same.

Our late friend once indulged in this train of thought in my presence:—How delightful it would be if all Christians could meet together on the common ground of discipleship, without reference to any of their doctrinal differences! How pleasant it would be if all the people of a certain vicinage or district could attend the same parish church! and I consider this wish as consistent both with benevolence and piety. But our friend needed not that any should testify the reason which prevents so happy a consummation; *the wall of partition*, not of our raising, but yet of man's raising, which keeps us *out* of the Parish Church, and deprives us of all the social privileges and opportunities of friendly and affectionate intercourse, for which we trust that some of us are no less fitted than Churchmen themselves: that preventive is the conviction which we have formed solemnly, deliberately, with a perfect knowledge of all the losses which are to be sustained in consequence of it, that there is that in the ordinary Morning Worship of the Established Church, in this respect left quite unreformed from Popish times,

which prevents a conscientious Unitarian from habitually presenting his homage there, quite as much as in the house of Rimmon, or any other temple where other than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is adored as supreme. I shall detail to you presently the grounds of this conviction in our friend's own words; and with that, I think, I may close this rapid sketch, for I find in his written papers, with which I have been obligingly entrusted, an evidence of piety, of love of truth, of attachment to the Gospel, and of firm confidence in the expectations and promises of eternal life, which will well account for the perseverance I have described, and which will explain the perfect composure, preparedness, and satisfaction, with which he died; praying, in the paroxysms of pain which attended several of the last days, and perhaps weeks, of his life, that, if it pleased his heavenly Father, he would relieve him from his suffering; but that if it were otherwise determined, and that he should still endure for some little time (he knew that his end was near, and in simple, expressive language, intimated that to me the first time I visited him during his illness), if it were otherwise determined, he further prayed *that the will of God might be done.* I need not add where he had learnt this spirit and this language.—O! that every one who vaunts himself upon his orthodoxy had so much Christianity as this venerable man!

No longer, my friends and fellow worshippers, shall we be permitted to observe the regularity and seriousness with which our departed brother filled up his place in the weekly services of the Chapel, and in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Let us see to it that his example has left a suitable impression upon our minds, and that those who admire may have wisdom to imitate. For himself these earthly services and means of grace are no longer necessary. He is gone where faith and hope are to be swallowed up in joy; he is gone where the holy, the religious, the consistent, the tried servants of God are alone permitted to enter. Into that blest society, where he will recognize many of those whom he formerly loved and respected, he will be making fresh accessions of knowledge and happiness, and verifying and following out those *convictions* which he patiently and religiously, and in the right exercise of the Protestant principle, attained to on earth.

☞ The two following papers were found in Mr. Treacher's hand-writing, and bear evidence of having been composed by him in some of the last years of his life.

No. 1.

THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN'S CREED,

COLLECTED FROM THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

We believe in one almighty self-existent God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein; that he is in power omnipotent, able to do all his pleasure; in wisdom infinite, knowing how to execute all his purposes in the best manner; in mercy and goodness everlasting, not hating any thing he has made, but continually promoting the comfort and happiness of his creatures. In former times he sent wise men and prophets to instruct mankind in their duty, but in these latter days has sent his beloved Son, long prophesied of as the great Messiah, the brightness of his own glory and the express image of his person, to be the mediator between himself and man, to reveal the counsels of his wisdom, to impart the riches of his grace, and to publish and make known to man the whole mind and will of God, setting forth how he may obtain the favour of heaven and everlasting happiness. He spake as never man spake, and taught the way of God perfectly: He was without sin, and the spirit of the self-existent Jehovah was given him without measure; he is appointed the final Judge of quick and dead, and God will, in his own due time, through and by him, bring about the virtue, and consequently the happiness, of his whole rational creation. I ac-

knowledge his authority to forgive sin, and rely with entire faith and confidence in his promises that he will bring about most graciously all his good pleasure. To fear, to love, and to obey God is the whole duty of man, and will be the final employ of the blessed in the realms above. Sin, for wise purposes, is permitted for a time; but when those purposes are answered, sin and misery will be banished from the creation of God for ever; and, notwithstanding our numerous imperfections and errors, real sincerity will be graciously accepted in lieu of perfection.

This is my faith; and though it differs much from the great bulk of professing Christians, I feel happy in it, believing it to be so clearly set forth in the Holy Scriptures. What is required of man to obtain everlasting salvation?—Repentance towards God, and a firm faith in the promises of God as revealed by his beloved Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is life eternal,—to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Amen.

"If I am right, thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, O guide my heart
To find the better way!"

No. 2.

After looking at and considering the various opinions and religions in the world, I cannot but call myself a *Christian Unitarian;* that is, I sincerely believe in one supreme almighty God, the maker and preserver of all things, and the wise disposer of all events, who is not willing that any of his rational creatures should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be made finally happy. I believe God has never left himself without witness in the world, but in the beginning he spake unto our fathers by the Prophets, and in these latter days has sent his beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ to communicate his will to man, being filled with divine power to know the secrets of all hearts, to heal diseases, to raise the dead to life, to reconcile the world to God, by turning them from the evil of their ways, not imputing to the penitent their trespasses; and, finally, to judge the world in righteousness and mercy.

Our present state of existence, we have every reason to believe, is one of trial and probation, graciously intended by the Giver of all good to fit us for the peculiar enjoyment of a more perfect state of existence; a state in which the poor and the rich will be placed on a level, and where piety, meekness, benevolence, and obedience to the precepts of Christ, will constitute true greatness.

If we leave this world with dispositions fitting us for the happiness of heaven, we shall be capable of enjoying it; but if we want these dispositions, this happiness cannot be ours. If persons of depraved and sensual habits could be admitted into heaven, it would be no place of happiness to them, their acquired habits and dispositions totally disqualifying them for its spiritual and refined enjoyments. Happy he who can with sincerity say, I have to my comfort long considered Almighty God as my most merciful father and friend; and I cheerfully rest for final acceptance upon his free unmerited grace through his Son my Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. If I live, it will be well; if I die, it will be well: all is well under the direction of such a benevolent and merciful God.

The true Christian character is attained by slow degrees, and is not perfected on this side the grave. There we shall leave our infirmities and imperfections; then rise to newness of life. O glorious hour! O blessed abode!

Jehovah's the God we adore,
Our gracious benevolent Friend;
Whose love is as great as his power,
And knows neither measure nor end.
It is he is the first and the last,
Whose grace will conduct us safe home;
We'll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise him, all creatures here below!
Praise him, ye heavenly hosts above!
Praise him, Jehovah, God of love!

We may safely rely on that unbounded unwearied goodness of God which pours its hourly blessings on our head; which supported our infancy and guided our youth; which sent a Saviour to lead us in the path of duty, and to point out to us the way to heaven; which provides for our wants before we feel them, and fulfils our desires before we have expressed them; which has always been near us and around us to shield our weakness, to enlighten our ignorance, and to strengthen our heart, and which we are sure will not forsake us when flesh and heart shall fail. He has promised to look with complacency on our sincere though feeble endeavours, and to accept our well-intended though imperfect services: we receive the promise with gratitude, and rely on it with confidence. He knows our frame, he remembers we are dust; he has made us frail and imperfect, and his judgment will be adapted to our nature: but we must not plead our frailty in excuse for wilful error, though, in a world so evil as this, and with a nature so weak as ours, we know we cannot be perfect; but he has kindly promised every necessary assistance, and will graciously accept of sincerity in lieu of perfection. We ought to be careful how we blame those who differ from us in opinion; for men

do not believe what they *will*, but what they *must*, according to the evidence which has reached them.

I cannot satisfy my own feelings without citing a passage, in conclusion, from Dr. Evans's Dedication of his volume of Tracts and Discourses to our lately deceased friend, believing that it must have been often recurred to by himself and by members of his family. The writer, then an invalid, could scarcely have expected that his aged friend (it was in 1825) would so many years survive himself:—"And now, my dear sir, *adieu:* every blessing attend you, and your family! May your children, and children's children, remember the God of their fathers, who hath deservedly prospered you in all your undertakings! We have been long and felicitously connected. Our day is drawing to a close. *Soon we shall be laid not far apart in the silent tomb.* But death is only a temporary separation. We part to meet again in a region where 'painful farewells' are excluded.—AMEN."

ADDRESS AT THE INTERMENT.

Fellow Christians! it is our mournful duty to accompany to the grave the remains of a most respected brother, whom God has been pleased to grant to see many days of life. We mourn not the child called away in the morning of its existence; nor one engaged in the active and busy pursuits of the world, snatched from those employments to which he was yet devotedly and ardently attached: but we mourn, cherishing, at the same time, feelings of Christian resignation, the removal of one who had long discharged his duty in his day and generation; been weaned from the cares and from many of the joys of life; and who knew that, in the course of nature, his continuance here must be short.

We may say, I believe, that, like Timothy, our deceased friend had been acquainted with the Scriptures from his youth. But our friend enjoyed an advantage pertaining not to the youth and inexperience of that amiable disciple; for, like Simeon in the Gospel, his principles of religion and virtue had been cemented by the maturity of age; they had survived the shock of the youthful passions; and, having advanced to the very border of this earthly scene, he could cherish a firm confidence in the promises of Jehovah, and unfeigned gratitude to heaven for the varied blessings bestowed on him in his

journey through life. He could survey with satisfaction his numerous relatives and descendants, honourably and happily engaged in their respective callings; and, supported by the assurances and consolations of the Gospel, could exclaim with the same aged believer, "Lord! now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!"

How different the feelings and sentiments which we, my friends, as disciples of Jesus Christ, may reasonably entertain, compared with the sentiments of those who have no faith in a future life to guide and govern, but to whom the future is all dark, cheerless, and uncertain!

On evidence which amply satisfies our understandings, we believe that our blessed Master was commissioned by the Great Parent of the Universe to declare unto mankind the reality of a state of future retribution. "The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth." And, saith the beloved disciple, who had received the most ample evidence of the truth of the Gospel, "We have seen and bear witness, and shew to you, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

Let us rejoice in this glorious assurance, in this confident expectation, which God, who cannot lie, has permitted us to cherish. What importance and

dignity does the hope of eternal life impart to our present existence! How much does it illustrate the value of time, and the duty of improving and exerting the faculties which God has bestowed upon us! Never will the well-informed and well-principled Christian suffer his talents to be neglected, or his opportunities for useful and benevolent exertion to be unemployed, while there remain so many of the young to be instructed in the elements of necessary education,—so many of the poor who can lay up nothing for the time of sickness,—so much of corruption which the good man is bound to resist,—and so much of error on important subjects of religion still darkening and thereby disturbing the popular mind,—there will be no want of channels in which our benevolence may flow, no want of objects to which our most powerful energies may be devoted.

And as no consideration seems so well fitted to impart a conviction of the necessity of speedy exertion as that which is derived from human mortality, let us, now assembled around the remains of this venerable servant of God, who so admirably filled up the various offices to which he was called in life, and who set so consistent an example of attention to religious duties,—let us bind ourselves by the strongest obligations *to live in activity*, while God affords to us the means of life, and to use our means for advancing our brethren's improvement and hap-

piness while it is called *to-day*, and before the night of death cometh!

And may you, the numerous relatives and friends of our departed brother so intimately and affectionately united with the deceased, in compliance with the intimations which Divine Providence affords, have grace to make this solemn improvement of the late bereaving dispensation; and cherish the strong assurance which, as Christians, we may reasonably feel, that the separation from the friend whom you respected and loved is not *final*, but that, in the morning of the resurrection, when all the virtuous, the benevolent, and the pious, shall meet together in far happier circumstances and in a fairer clime, you may hope to meet him again, to your mutual delight and joy!

"And I heard a voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. And God himself shall be with them, and be their God: And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

Compton & Ritchie, Printers, Middle Street, Cloth Fair, London.

THE

CONSOLATIONS

DERIVED FROM A LIFE OF PIETY AND VIRTUE;

EXEMPLIFIED IN

A DISCOURSE

ON THE

DEATH OF MRS. TREACHER,

WIFE OF JOHN TREACHER, ESQ., OF STAMFORD HILL, WITH WHOM SHE HAD BEEN UNITED UPWARDS OF FIFTY-FIVE YEARS;

DELIVERED AT

WORSHIP STREET CHAPEL,

NEAR FINSBURY SQUARE, LONDON,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 1834.

By BENJAMIN MARDON, M.A.

"The virtues of the dead are not deposited in the same grave with their bodies; they are entombed in a nobler monument—in the breasts of their admirers and friends; nor are they subject to the same decay, but live with undiminished lustre."—Rev. George Walker.

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1834.

The following Discourse makes no pretension whatever to literary distinction. It was wholly prepared for delivery in the short interval between the funeral of the excellent person to whom it relates and the following Lord's-day, at a season, too, when a variety of necessary occupations left to the preacher few hours for private meditation. In transcribing his notes written with this disadvantage, he has not hesitated to introduce some few changes, which still leave, he is aware, a composition too imperfect. But he cheerfully waives all minor considerations, in the hope that he may gratify the laudable feelings of pious and dutiful affection which animate the breasts of the numerous relatives of the deceased, and which have led them to solicit this permanent record. If he should, by this compliance, succeed in confirming one Christian conviction of their minds, in directing one heart to the true source of the mourner's comfort, and in animating one youthful survivor to virtue, by this view of the excellence of his ancestor, his end will be abundantly answered; and he will be grateful to the Father of Spirits in being made the instrument of good.

London,
June 12, 1834.

A DISCOURSE, &c.

FIRST EPISTLE of ST. JOHN, CHAP. II, VERSE 17.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

HEAR this, ye busy actors on the theatre of life, whose thoughts, whose wishes, and whose purposes, are centered in the world! Hear this, ye transgressors of the laws of God, ye enemies to your own and your fellow-creatures' happiness; vainly imagining that you are engaged in the pursuit of the highest enjoyment, while you are only seeking to grasp a fleeting, unsubstantial shadow. And hear this promise of the holy Evangelist, ye who, through life, have pursued a course of undeviating integrity, virtue, and religion; unsuccessful, perhaps, in a worldly sense, yet successful in the search after true enjoyment, and partakers of an inheritance which surpasses all earthly honours and all earthly glory. Whatever else ye may have missed, ye have earned to yourselves an honourable degree in that kingdom which is everlasting, for "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

I purpose, my fellow Christians, to improve this solemn occasion, when I see before me an unusual number

of worshippers in a funereal garb, by directing your attention, and my own, to the *evidence* for the magnificent truths propounded by the Apostle; as a suitable introduction to some consolatory and instructive inferences, which may speak peace to the sorrowing, and gladden the heart of the mourner with the delightful and animating assurances of the gospel.

"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

The different parts of this proposition require distinct and opposite proof. The evidence for the latter position is derived from faith, and admits, in the present life, of no higher evidence. We must wait till a future life before faith and hope can be turned into joy. But the evidence for the first part of the apostolic declaration is grounded on experience—the experience of ourselves—of all human beings. It is admitted by all men, of all parties, under every possible discrepancy of opinion; and though there is scarcely another topic on which men are universally agreed, in this, the mutability of life, and every thing which belongs to it, the world, and all things that are therein, there is, alas! there can be, no difference of opinion. We see the partial exemplification of this truth every day, every hour of our lives. Since we came to this place of worship, what changes have taken place in the world, in its inhabitants, in their prospects, and in their happiness! What numbers of men, women, and children, have died in this interval;

how many human beings have been born; and even the globe itself has travelled thousands of miles from the place which it then occupied!

No subject of moralizing is so trite as the changeableness of all things human. All men make the observation, all men feel its truth; every moment collects fresh evidence: its certainty is so obvious, that it may be said to have passed into an *axiom;* yet nothing is more certain than that we are in danger of forgetting it every hour. Some mysterious law of our nature has made it possible (in this solitary instance perhaps) for us to know, and yet not to know, this mighty truth, that "*the world is passing away, and the lust thereof.*" For how can it be said that *he knows* this world is transitory, who acts as if the world and all its joys were to last for ever? Is this a paradox of nature designed to baffle the boldest efforts of our puny understandings? or does the whole difficulty resolve itself into human inconsistency and folly?

One of the most impressive and highly-wrought passages of our dramatic bard happily illustrates the transitoriness of the present stage of existence:—

> These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air;
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a wreck behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

"For what is your life?" saith a Christian Apostle; "It is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away!"

The holy Apostle has announced, "that he who doeth the will of God, abideth for ever." Now, whatever line may be drawn between those assertions of the sacred writers, which they deliver as the truths of God, and the expression of their own personal opinion, this assurance of the eternal stability of the good man must be admitted as professedly a doctrine of religion. No assurance of the Bible equals this assurance in importance—in importance to us. It professes to be the Christian's charter. We cannot believe in the divine authority of Christ, and call into question this doctrine of the beloved Apostle. It is Christ's *own* doctrine. In other words, but of perfectly equivalent meaning, he said to the sisters of Lazarus, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." And the belief which Christ intended is a practical belief, overruling the actions, and governing the life. Christ professed to feed the souls of his disciples with food which should endure, and enable them to endure, for ever. And St. John has but reiterated the doctrine of his master,

when he declares, "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

But, as Christ said to Martha, after his own announcement of these glad tidings, "Believest thou this?" he may be considered as addressing the same question to each one of us assembled—Believest thou this assurance of my holy Apostle?

The promise of immortal happiness to those who persevere in well doing, has often appeared too exalted, too noble, too high a destination for man to realize. And if man had been left to the aspirations of his own anxious and soaring mind, as before the Sun of Righteousness rose in the firmament, there might well be "doubt, uncertainty, and gloom," about the momentous subject of a future existence. That we should live *at all* in a future world appeared uncertain, though the belief was interwoven with the popular superstitions: the poets sang it, many a philosopher defended it, yet others called it into question. But that there should be not life only, but immortality, an eternal life, a life of never-ending bliss—this was reserved for Jesus to communicate; this constitutes the *Gospel*, the good news which the Saviour promulgated.

And why should we believe this? Clearly it is our *interest* to believe it. No motive to virtue can possess half the power; no source of happiness can be compared in fulness and in freshness to the Christian's hope. May we, then, reasonably entertain it? It is this con-

sideration which renders inquiry into the Christian evidence so proper, so interesting, so necessary. I might presume, my friends, upon your satisfaction with this evidence; I might take for granted that you know and feel its weight; and yet, with pious solicitude, we are wont to exclaim,

> O for a firm and lively faith
> To credit what our Father saith!

That the words of Christ are, indeed, the words of truth, that his religion is a message from heaven, we believe on the ground of his own pure and spotless character, which renders it impossible that he should have affirmed what he did not know to be true. Who has ever convicted him of the sin of falsehood? The driven snow is not more pure than were the heart and life of Jesus. And therefore I believe in his divine mission, upon his own word; and were there no other evidence, while we were in possession of the evangelical accounts of our Saviour's life, I should believe that evidence sufficient. But it has pleased Providence to annex to the evidence arising from our Lord's character other appropriate and decisive proofs. The word of ancient prophecy, which foretold the coming of a "Prince of Peace," was fulfilled in Jesus, and in no other. He himself spoke of the coming events of that nation, and of the world, in such a manner as no man could speak, except God were with him. He exhibited the most astonishing superiority over many of the laws of nature—

a power which none could bestow but the great Legislator himself, designing to furnish the proper attestation to the Prophet's pretensions by miracles, wonders, and signs, which endured the minutest scrutiny at the time, and the simple narration of which has carried conviction to the minds of the profoundest philosophers of succeeding ages. The religion of Jesus, when left to succeed by its own mighty energies, received an impulse which must have originated in Heaven; and the seal of divinity was given to it by the appropriate miracle of the resurrection of its founder; at once proving, that he had been sent on the errand of man's redemption, and illustrating the manner in which man is to rise superior to his present weaknesses, and to soar aloft to glory, honour, and immortality. Man is sown in weakness, he is raised in power; he is sown in corruption, he is raised in glory; he is sown an animal, he is raised a spirit.

And it follows, from the Christian evidence, that the religion of Jesus is of divine original. And the principles which really constitute that religion (about which, you are aware, there is much diversity of opinion) may be relied upon as the principles of eternal truth. The future happiness, the permanent, "abiding," everlasting felicity of the good man, may be relied upon as a law in the moral government of God. Even in the present world, virtuous and holy conduct carries with it an indescribable satisfaction, which nothing else on earth can supply. And heaven will be the future abode of

the holy, the benevolent, and the good; where no moth will corrupt, no rust destroy, thieves cannot break through to steal; but security, peace, ever-growing improvement, delightful reflections, splendid prospects, unbounded glories, will be theirs for ever.

"Happy are they who learn to copy from those models of probity and virtue which we have the means of contemplating in real life! Though all have not the like opportunities of distinguishing themselves by their virtuous deeds, yet there is no one who in his proper sphere, however narrow it may be, cannot do some good in his day, and leave behind him the fragrance of a good name. Whatever be his rank or condition, he may leave to his family an example which will prove to them of more real and intrinsic value than the richest treasures and the most splendid inheritance."

"The memorial of the just is deeply engraven on the hearts of those who have fallen within the sphere of his beneficence. He who has supplied the poor with bread, who has delivered the oppressed, by whom the orphan has been reared, the widow sustained, the aged comforted, the ignorant instructed, the vicious reclaimed,—this generous benefactor has erected in the hearts of his fellow-creatures a monument more durable than all the honours that can be acquired by vanity, pride, and ambition."

When any of you are suddenly deprived of a near and valued friend, on whose integrity and honour you

safely depended; whose filial attentions were gratefully received, and to whom, according to the course of nature, you might reasonably look for the respectful and dutiful offices that should smooth the decline of life, and repay, in some degree, the early and anxious throbbings of parental solitude,—you cannot but deeply feel the anguish of separation. Blessed be God, however, the same hand which deprives you of blessings also ministers to you similar sources of consolation, in the hope, it may be, of earthly enjoyment; but, at any rate, in the assured conviction, that there is another world, in which the virtuous parent shall never more be separated from the virtuous child, nor the sister from the brother; but where God's holy, happy, and united family shall be ever increasing in knowledge and pious affection, drinking in fresh draughts of pure and heavenly happiness, and making a continued progress to the highest perfection of their natures!

Considerations such as these are precious to the survivors, who have been deprived of friends on whose kind and virtuous actions they can reflect with satisfaction. They justly grieve for beloved and honoured persons, who were dear to them as their own souls. They felt that in them much of their happiness was centered, and, but for the Christian's hope, they would seem now to be separated from them for ever. "When the heart is sad, it is natural for the virtuous mourner to seek the silent sequestered retreat; to devote the lonely hour to

the tender recollections of sorrow; to consider it as a sacred duty to cherish the remembrance; to dwell upon the virtues and excellences of departed worth; to give vent to the fulness of the soul; to indulge in all the luxury of tears.

When such friends part,
'Tis the survivor dies.

"Yet when the lenient hand of time has somewhat blunted the keen edge of affliction, and mitigated the poignancy of exquisite distress, then the upright and well-regulated mind, recovering its wonted tone and elastic vigour, will not relinquish the cheering hope of hereafter renewing the intercourse of virtuous minds, assured that the bonds of tenderness and of friendship are not broken or dissolved in the grave.

"If we lament the departure of a friend setting out on a long, a perilous, and toilsome journey to a distant country, yet we cherish the fond hope of meeting him again with fair prospects of happiness and delight. Those, therefore, who are left in a world of vanity and care must not give way to immoderate and unavailing sorrow for those who are gone before; but must look beyond the gloomy scenes of this valley of pain, beyond this cloudy atmosphere, to brighter days and more propitious skies. They must raise their views above the house of mourning and death to that bright and glorious day, when the righteous shall be raised to a life of unmingled bliss—an existence that deserves the name of

life, unalloyed and uninterrupted by the languor of sickness, the inflictions of pain, the visitations of grief, the pang of separation, and the bitterness of death*."

The excellent person whose recent departure so many of you affectionately deplore, deserves that some of the more prominent features of her character should be held up to imitation. She would desire no panegyric, nor do I mean to bestow any. Yet the benefit of survivors should be kept in view by a faithful representation of departed excellence. She had the great advantage (which can never be too highly appreciated) of being born of pious parents. Their religious communion, and her own in early life, was that of the Church of England. From the time of her marriage, she was able (and it is a happy circumstance, where this can be conscientiously done) to accompany her partner to the house of religious worship. The chapel in Barbican, so well known in the early history of the General Baptists, was that which they attended, till this chapel was erected. She is known to have felt much esteem for several of the Ministers of this connexion, and devoutly joined in the means of grace as administered by them to their congregation. Under the influence of the love of God, she was directed to many deeds of benevolence and mercy. With much satisfaction I would record her charitable assistance to

* These beautiful sentences are extracted from a Sermon by the Rev. T. Jervis, who has recently fallen asleep, full of honour, and at an advanced age.

an aged Minister of our connexion, of great learning and unwearied industry, but who, from his infirmities, was left almost friendless in his declining years*.

This excellent person is described to me, by one most qualified to know the truth, as exhibiting the seriousness with which she had been brought up in the habitually pious frame of her mind. She was much attached to public worship and family prayer; and this attachment was unremitted during the long period of fifty-five years, viz. from the time of her union with her surviving partner. She made constant use of the Rev. JOHN PALMER'S Family Prayer Book; and there can be no doubt that so excellent a help to devotion would greatly cherish her previous feelings of Christian piety. She was candid and liberal in her views of religion; but, in common with some of the most pious believers, she particularly disliked controversy on doctrinal points. "She thought all serious professors meant well, though they might not be able to explain their views to the satisfaction of others." She was not pleased (and I have met with many such instances) with the employment of party names. From this feeling, in part, it was that she would never acknowledge herself an Unitarian, taking that word, it is believed, in the restricted sense; but in the proper, the enlarged signification, by which it includes all Christian professors who regard God as one person, and to be exclusive-

* The Rev. CHARLES BULKLEY, Author of "Notes on the Bible," in 3 vol. 8vo, &c. He died in the year 1797.

ly worshipped with supreme honour, the term might, I suppose, have been correctly assumed by her. She had quite rational views of religion, and believed firmly in the supremacy of the Father, in his unbounded goodness and mercy to all his creatures, and that he wisely orders all things for the best. No wonder, with such a creed, that she had "all joy and peace in believing." And with this impression of religion, after a very short illness, she died calm and easy, in full possession of her mental powers. She sustained, in the closing scenes, the firmness which was an original endowment of her mind, having perfect knowledge of all around her; and exhibiting an amiable desire to save her near relative the pain of witnessing the last struggle of expiring nature, worthy of a disciple of that Jesus who comforted his weeping followers,—she sweetly feel asleep*.

And thus has a pious lady, and fellow-worshipper, been removed from us, who had proved herself a most affectionate wife and a sincere lover of her children; for whose interest and comfort she thought no sacrifice too great, and to whose welfare she was ardently, yet not exclusively, devoted. Most applicable now are those words of scripture, May I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like *her's!* "I heard a voice saying unto me, Write, from henceforth, blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. Even so, saith the Spirit;

* Mrs. TREACHER departed this life on the 18th of May, 1834, in the 75th year of her age.

for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." "The world passeth away, and the desire thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Friends and relatives of the deceased! comfort yourselves with these noble assurances of the Gospel. Suffer your minds to entertain no distrust of the Almighty's proceedings; but place confidence in the wisdom of the Supreme Ruler, trusting that all is right; that every dispensation of his providence is wise and good. Encourage your minds to look forward to that happy world in which virtuous friends who have been separated shall be re-united; shall together rejoice in their triumph over the infirmities and temptations of this mortal state, and pursue those employments and engage in the acquisition of that knowledge which shall impart a mutual and ever-increasing delight; where benevolence shall burn with a purer flame; charity be rendered heavenly and perfect; and devotion, freed from all the doubts and difficulties which now present themselves, shall be continually elevating the holy worshippers towards the throne of the Eternal, mingling with all their thoughts, and consecrating all their affections, and animating to the most unreserved obedience to the laws of God!

The Hymn which was sung after Sermon, composed by Mrs. Rogers, Bristol Collection, No. 414.

WHY should I murmur or repine
At what may be my Father's will?
Wisdom and power, and love, are thine—
Thy grace is all-sufficient still.

Thy plans, beyond the bounds of time,
Eternal ages comprehend;
To form the soul to joys sublime
In that blest world which ne'er shall end.

Bow then, my soul, submissive bow,
And trust thy gracious Father's love;
His kind design in bringing low
Is to prepare for joys above.

This transient scene will soon be o'er,
Its joys, its sorrows pass away:
The night of gloom returns no more,
But ushers in a glorious day.

PRAYER.

O thou tender and compassionate Father of thy creatures, the Fountain of all perfection, the Source of all excellence, and the Author of every good and perfect gift! mould our hearts, we beseech thee, according to thy gracious will. Grant us a firm and unshaken faith

in all the measures of thy providence. Placing an unreserved trust in thy purposes of love, may we meet all thy dispensations with a grateful and willing mind! Whether thou shouldst appoint prosperity or adversity as our portion, may we be ever disposed to look forward to the final result of thy dispensations; to that blissful period, when thy rational creatures, having been subjected to various degrees of discipline, shall be put in possession of the means of lasting happiness, and be making progress towards the highest perfection of our natures. Whenever, in this state of probation, thy wisdom and thy goodness shall deprive us of some of our earthly comforts, and remove from us those who administered to our present happiness, and accompanied us in the road that leads to heaven, may we bow with meek composure and with filial trust to all thy appointments! May it be the language of our hearts, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord!" Assist us, heavenly Father, to make a due use of the blessings which remain to us, and with all diligence to make our calling and election sure; remembering that the season of our earthly probation is rapidly passing away, and that we shall soon be placed in the grave, where no knowledge or device is found.

Hear us, merciful Father! in these our humble petitions and devout meditations. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Compton & Ritchie, Printers, Middle Street, Cloth Fair, London.

THE

CHRISTIAN'S HOPE IN DEATH:

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

MEETING-HOUSE OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, BELFAST,

On Sunday, March 7, 1841;

ON OCCASION OF THE

DEATH OF THE REV. WILLIAM BRUCE, D.D.

SENIOR PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATION:

AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE,

BY J. SCOTT PORTER.

BELFAST,
JOHN HODGSON, HIGH STREET;
LONDON, J. MARDON, FARRINGDON STREET;
DUBLIN, HODGES & SMITH.

1841.

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM BRUCE, A.M.

THIS

HUMBLE TRIBUTE,

TO THE MEMORY OF HIS BELOVED AND VENERATED FATHER,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE,

J. SCOTT PORTER.

March 10, 1841.

A DISCOURSE.

2 Timothy iv. 6, 7, 8.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

My Christian Friends,—I appear before you this day to deliver an address applicable to an event which has deeply moved the hearts of this Congregation. I have undertaken this duty, not in mere compliance with established custom, upon the death of a minister; although it is a usage which I respect: nor simply in order to gratify my own heart by giving public expression to my sentiments; although if silence had been imposed upon me, I should have felt it as a painful constraint:—not from a wish to connect my name with that of the honoured dead, by pronouncing a funeral discourse upon this occasion; although I am fully sensible of the distinction conferred by the task which has devolved upon me. Much less am I influenced by a vain desire to scatter the superfluous flowers of panegyric upon the remains of one whose solid merits secured to their owner respect while living, and stand in need of no eulogium to cause their memory to be cherished now that he is numbered with the dead. I have been actuated chiefly and mainly by a conviction that the event to which God's providence has made us witnesses, is capable of a serious religious application; and that it would be a neglect of duty to omit the opportunity which it affords, for awakening feelings and impressing lessons, that may be of everlasting importance.

In selecting a passage of Scripture for an introduction to my discourse, the words in which the Apostle Paul expresses his readiness for death and his hope in dying, forced themselves upon my mind.

"For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not unto me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* These expressions are most apposite to the occasion which must now engage our attention: they convey such sentiments as our departed friend habitually cherished: and they are full of important and practical lessons to us all. For these reasons I shall lay before you a few reflections designed to illustrate their meaning, and to point out their moral use.

The expressions which have just been read are full of that assurance of victory over death, which nothing but true and vital religion can inspire. In the commencement of the passage, Paul speaks of himself as of a sacrifice, about to be slain at the altar, for the good of his fellow-christians. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." He then describes the feelings of his mind on this occasion, in a metaphor drawn from the athletic contests which were so celebrated in ancient Greece. He has started as a competitor in the race, and has already reached the goal. "I have been successful in the contest: I have finished my course;" or, in plain language, "I have kept my faith" to God and man, to my Saviour and his truth, by fulfilling the obligations laid upon me, as an individual, and as a missionary of the Gospel. The Apostle concludes in a strain of triumphant anticipation. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge will give me at that day: and not unto me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

In this passage we have placed before us a living picture of the Apostle's mind. We behold death approaching him with rapid strides, arrayed in all his terrors. But the heroic martyr stands unappalled: no blanching of the cheek; no quailing of the eye: he looks the fell destroyer in the face, and full of a triumphant faith and glorious hope, he points to the garland which awaits him in the hea-

* This version is retained in the Sermon, although it does not exactly convey the force of the original. Perhaps a better rendering would be, "For I am now receiving the libation, and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have maintained a successful contest: I have finished my career: I have kept my [plighted] faith. Henceforth the garland of righteousness is laid up for me, with which the Lord, the righteous judge, will requite me in that day: and not me only, but also all them that have loved his appearing." The libation was poured upon the head of the victim, the last thing before it was slain at the altar. In the 7th verse, the allusion is not to warfare, but to the public games: and in the 8th verse, the term employed in the original denotes reward and recompense, as well as gift.

venly mansions: and, with rapture in voice and look, exclaims, "I have finished my course: I have kept my faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness!"

And what was the ground of the hope which thus cheered the venerable Paul in the prospect of his dissolution:—what was the thought that came home to his breast with so much strength and power:—what the star that shed its light upon his soul in that hour of gloom? Hear the answer in his own words. "I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith." This was a fountain of comfort whose draught cheered and strengthened him:—the consciousness that he had laboured faithfully in his sphere of duty and well fulfilled his mission. This was the conviction that brought him consolation, peace, and triumph, while in the power of Nero and the prospect of an awful martyrdom.*

Fellow-Christians, let me endeavour to impress upon your minds the importance of the consolation which these words suggest:—its importance during life; its unspeakable importance at the approach of death. There is no period of our earthly existence, at which we shall not find a conviction of faithfulness to God and duty, to be the source of the purest and most permanent happiness which we can enjoy. To a man who feels that he is acting worthily of the nature which God has given,—of the light which his Creator has bestowed, and of the hopes which his Maker has inspired,—nothing can produce abiding misery. Conscience will illumine the darkness of adverse circumstances; and will gild with sunny ray the brightness of prosperity. This happiness we can all experience, if we but wish and will to have it; for we cannot be placed in any situation in which it will not be in our power to do justly:—to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God:—to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and religiously." We are entered as competitors in a contest in which all may be victorious. Even during its progress we may enjoy much of that peace and calm contentment, which, in their fullest measure, attend upon its successful close.

All may experience this happiness. Yes:—all! Even you who

* The 2d Epistle to Timothy was written apparently about A.D. 61, and the Apostle is believed to have suffered martyrdom in the persecution under Nero, which is described by Tacitus and mentioned by Suetonius, and which occurred A.D. 64 and 65. Consequently, a period of three or four years must have intervened between the writing of the epistle and the death of its author. But it is evident that Paul, when he wrote it, considered his martyrdom as close at hand; and therefore expresses himself as in the near prospect of dissolution.

are oppressed with grief and shame for sins, and are ready to resign yourselves to despair, — even for you there is comfort, hope, and peace; a crown laid up in heaven awaiting your acceptance. I am sure there is not an individual in this assemblage, who has been guilty of offences half so heinous, as those which stained the earlier years of him who first uttered the exulting language, which has given rise to these observations. O my fellow-christians! if you are really awakened to a sense of sin, — if you have felt the burning tear of contrition, — if your bosom has heaved with the tumultuous sobbings of remorse, — if you have resembled Paul in guilt and crime, imitate him also in his repentance, and in his after-life of Christian holiness and energetic virtue. Listen like him to the voice of your risen Saviour: embrace his invitation, "Come unto him," though "wearied and heavy laden" with the burden of your transgressions, and he will "give you rest." Maintain the glorious conflict in which you are now engaged: — run with patience in the race that is set before you, and you may yet share that joy and hope of which the language of the Apostle affords so striking an example. Who could be more alive to the sense of guilt than Paul? After many years of virtuous exertion had passed over his head, he still remembered his crime, and charged himself with its enormity.* But he knew, at the same time, that he had been faithful to his great Master from the moment of solemnly devoting himself to Christ: and in this consciousness he had a store of everlasting consolation provided. And thrice happy is the man who can claim such comfort as his own. The man who feels that he is the friend of God, and knows his Maker for his friend, can defy the powers of the world to shake his confidence or abate his bliss.

But if, during life, such comforts are the purest and the firmest, they will, at the hour of death, acquire a tenfold value and importance. When the world is receding from the view, and its attractions are diminishing in the distance — when the turmoil of its passions is hushed, and the voice of its allurements can charm the ear no longer — when the great veil is drawn aside, and eternity lies open before us — and we feel ourselves already standing in the presence of Omniscience, to answer for the deeds done in these earthly bodies, — what can then support the soul, weakened and distracted by the regrets of departure, and the decay of its frail tenement? Worldly

* See 1 Tim. i. 12—16.

delights can please no more. Our only comforts must be the comforts of the mind.

There are those who, in such circumstances, recommend various remedies; and sometimes recommend them as the only hope in death: remedies which this is not the proper season for examining. I content myself on this occasion with dwelling on the value, the indispensable necessity, of that sweet assuagement of the mind which cheered the Apostle Paul at the prospect of his dissolution:—a conscience void of offence:—the recollection of a well-spent life. This must have been among the best and dearest of his consolations; for he has named no other. And I hope and trust, that whatever may have been added,—and, alas! much has been added to the pure system of the Christian faith, as unfolded in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles of our Lord,—I hope and trust there is still so much respect for their judgment remaining in all sects, and in every church, that no one, on calm reflection, will venture to deny that the ground of hope mentioned in our text is a legitimate one; or to dispute its great importance, and its absolute necessity for the enjoyment of any well-founded assurance of acceptance hereafter. The Apostle Paul clearly states, as his main topic of comfort and hope, the reflections occasioned by a retrospect of his past life, and the consciousness of his fidelity to his Maker. "I have fought the good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept my plighted faith." Such were the comforts which cheered this venerable martyr; and similar comforts have supported the minds of many sincere and pious disciples of Jesus in times more modern. I have known such instances. I have stood beside the aged man, departing from this life, full of years,—full of the matured virtues of the Christian character:—I have stood beside the couch of the wife and mother, about to be separated from the objects of her warm affection:—I have stood near the bed on which lay a youthful Christian, innocent and lovely, smitten suddenly down by deadly disease, when all seemed full of hope and joy, and summoned early to join the kindred spirits of the heavenly host:—I have heard their expressions —full of hope, and faith, and glad anticipation:—I have observed their demeanour, and scanned the indications of their inward thoughts —and I have learned from such scenes, that there is a peace and joy, —not fanatical nor enthusiastic, but a calm, rational, and deliberate peace—arising from an approving conscience, which makes the death of a real Christian appear more like a translation than a disso-

lution. It is not often that I dwell upon such themes, but this occasion calls the mention of them forth.

In these observations, I have confined myself to the mere illustration of the leading thought suggested by the text: nor have I wandered beyond its limits. St. Paul has held forth this consciousness of his fidelity in the service of his heavenly Father as a source of hope and comfort, and in the same light I have presented it to you. He does not affirm that he looked upon the crown of righteousness as the merited reward of his own virtue: neither have I so exhibited it. This Apostle elsewhere disclaims and refutes all notion of the merit of human beings as entitling them, on the ground of justice, either to temporal privileges or eternal rewards:* and in these views, I heartily concur; nor, so far as I know or believe, is there a single person in the whole religious community to which I belong, who does not cordially embrace them. We have no thought of establishing our claim to heaven by challenging it as the due recompense of our righteousness. We approach our Father who is in heaven to cry for mercy, not to demand justice. But, at the same time, we are convinced, that "without holiness we cannot see God:"† for although our services are not profitable unto him, yet we are assured, that "with such sacrifices he is well pleased."‡

Much more might be said upon this interesting topic, but I must forbear. I content myself with merely observing, that if, like this illustrious teacher of our faith, we devote our lives to the discharge of our allotted duties, we may humbly hope, through the mercy of our God, to experience the same comfort which supported him in his dying hour. If we live unto the Lord, we shall also die unto the Lord: and when the allotted hour for our departure comes, an approving conscience and a holy life will enable us to bid it welcome. We shall be ready for its approach. Let it come in God's good time, and Christian faith, and a pious trust, and a glorious hope, will make it welcome. The day of death has no alarms for him who is ready to meet his Lord. By many such, it has been met and hailed as the most welcome day that ever shone upon them from their birth. Oh! may all we who are here present, be enabled, through the grace of God, so to live, that, when the hour of death approaches, we may have it in our power to say, with the venerable Apostle, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I

* See Rom. iii. 20, &c. † Heb. xii. 14. ‡ Heb. xiii. 16.

have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept my plighted faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will requite me in that day: and not me only, but all them also who have loved his appearing!"

I have reason to think, that, in the greater part of what I have now advanced, I should have had the concurrence of that venerated man, whose removal has given occasion to these reflections. Assuredly, it has seldom been our privilege to know an individual whose whole course and tenour of life would have justified him more amply in adopting the language of this passage, and humbly applying to his own heart the hope and consolation which it brings. During the whole of a life, which was protracted far beyond the usual term of existence here,* he was actively engaged in promoting what he conscientiously believed to be the cause of holiness and truth. Even those who looked with regret upon his opinions, and held no sympathy with his labours for their advancement, yet awarded to him, personally, the meed of their approbation; for they could not but admit the purity of the motives by which he was actuated. By those who knew him more intimately, and especially by those who adopted, in general, the same views of religious truth which he entertained, he was regarded with feelings stronger than those of ordinary attachment — they amounted to veneration.

Dr. Bruce was descended from a line of ancestors who, in remote times, were illustrious in the aristocracy, and closely connected with the Royal Family of Scotland: and, after the period of the reformation, some of his progenitors were not less distinguished in the Scottish National Church.† In this country also, his family has long been

* Dr. Bruce was born on the 30th of July, 1757, and died on the 27th of February, 1841: he was consequently in his 84th year at the time of his death.

† Robert de Brus, the ancestor of the family of Bruce, came over from Normandy to England with William the Conqueror, by whom he was invested with ninety-four lordships in the County of York. The second branch of this house passed into Scotland, intermarried with the Royal Family of that kingdom, and eventually succeeded to the throne. From it, by the female line, the royal houses of Stewart and of Hanover derive their descent and their title to the crown of Scotland.

The Irish branch of the family of Bruce (of which Dr. Bruce was the head and representative in the direct male line), is descended from John de Bruce, third son of Robert, lord of Annandale, who was competitor with John de Balioll for the crown of Scotland in 1290; and whose grandson, Robert, afterwards became King of Scotland. Sir Robert Bruce, grandson to John de Bruce abovementioned, is addressed by K. David Bruce in a charter of investiture, as his "beloved kinsman." He intermarried with a branch of the royal house of Stewart. One of his descendants, the Rev. Robert Bruce, was a distinguished minister of the Reformed Church of Scotland in the time of K. James VI.; and was selected by His Majesty to place the crown upon the head of the Queen Consort at her coronation in the Abbey-church at Holyrood, in the year 1590.

conspicuous in the annals of Presbyterianism. His great-great-grand-father, Michael Bruce, became the Presbyterian minister of Killinchy, in times of persecution;* and largely partook of the calamities which were the portion of his church in that unhappy period. His grand-father, also named Michael Bruce, was brought up to the same profession, and became minister of Holywood; and, as such, a member of the General Synod of Ulster. At a time when creeds and confessions were regarded by many as of nearly equal authority with the holy scriptures, he openly avowed the principle of non-subscription to human articles of faith: fought side by side with our own Halliday, and with Nevin, Kirkpatrick, and Abernethy, the battle of religious freedom, — with them was expelled from the Synod, and joined with them in forming the Presbytery of Antrim, on the same liberal and comprehensive principle to which it has ever since adhered. His great-uncle, William Bruce, Esq. a merchant in Dublin, had the honour of originating, and, by his exertions, was the chief instrument in establishing the Widows' Fund, now of so much importance to the various Presbyterian bodies in the North of Ireland, and received the public thanks of the assembled ministers for his services.† His father was the Rev. Samuel Bruce, minister of Strand Street congregation in Dublin.‡

Our lamented friend early devoted himself to the work of the ministry. He passed through the undergraduate course in the University of Dublin with reputation, having obtained a scholarship

* The Rev. Michael Bruce, son to the above-named Robert, became minister of Killinchy in Ireland; but was, in 1651, ejected, and driven to Scotland, together with other ministers, by Colonel Venables and the Parliament party, for adhering to the king. He afterwards returned to Ireland; but, upon the restoration of K. Charles II. he was deprived of his living, as a non-conformist, by the celebrated Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down and Connor, and again compelled to retire to Scotland. In 1668, he was apprehended and brought before the privy council of that kingdom, for officiating as a minister in private; and, having acknowledged the fact, he was sentenced to banishment for life, upon pain of death in case of his returning. Being sent a prisoner to London, he was there farther condemned to be transported to the fortress of Tangier in Africa; but, after undergoing great troubles, and a long imprisonment in England and Scotland, he at length succeeded in obtaining a connivance, and returned to Ireland, where he died in 1692

His son was the Rev. James Bruce of Killileagh, whose *eldest* son was the Rev. Michael Bruce of Holywood, grand-father to Dr. Bruce. The *second* son of the Rev. James Bruce above-named was the Rev. Patrick Bruce, successively minister of Drumbo and Killileagh, in the county of Down, from whom the family of Sir James Bruce, Bart of Down-hill, in the county of Londonderry, is lineally descended. The above account is abridged from Calderwood, Spotswood, Wodrow, and Sir W. Betham; the latter of whom gives the pedigree of the family in full. *See Baronetage of England*, vol. V. pages 45—49, *Appendix*.

† See Minute Book of the Contributors to the Widows' Fund.

‡ He was a leading man among the Irish Dissenters; and corresponded confidentially on their affairs with the private secretary of Lord Chatham, till his death in 1667. At this time, his second son, William, was only ten years of age.

in 1775. After taking the degree of A.B. in that university, he studied for one session in Glasgow College; and, ultimately, repaired for his theological education to the Warrington Academy, which was, at that time, the principal seat of learning among the English Dissenters. His first ministerial settlement was in Lisburn; where he was ordained, in the year 1779, by the Presbytery of Bangor, belonging to the General Synod of Ulster: thence he removed, in 1782, to Strand Street in Dublin, under what was then called the Southern Association, now denominated the Synod of Munster;—and, finally, in the year 1790, he came to Belfast, having accepted a unanimous call to this congregation.

On his removal to this town he also became Principal of the Belfast Academy—an office to which he was, in like manner, unanimously elected by its trustees and patrons. Under his management, the Academy attained an eminence which it had never known before; and became decidedly the first seminary in the North of Ireland, both from the number and the attainments of its pupils; more especially, in the classical department, which was under the direct superintendance of the Principal. It sent forth two Fellows of Trinity College, and two Professors in our Academical Institution, besides many other gentlemen who have filled, and are filling with distinguished reputation, eminent stations in the church, in the law, in politics, and in science. In this office, Dr. Bruce continued till the year 1822; when he retired from office amidst the regrets of the proprietors of the establishment, and the warmest expressions of their gratitude and good wishes. Several of his publications attest the zeal with which he cultivated and promoted classical and general literature.

But these literary engagements never withdrew his mind from the studies which are necessary to the faithful discharge of the ministry. This congregation flourished under his pastorship, as its records show, to a degree unexampled in its former history; insomuch that it was found necessary to enlarge the galleries of the Meeting-house, in order to make room for the numerous applicants: and even after this had been done, it was sometimes found difficult to provide accommodation for the families who were desirous of obtaining it. This extensive influence he obtained, not by inflaming the passions or pandering to the prejudices of the multitude; no man ever was farther from doing this:—nor by stooping to indirect and underhand acts, for the sake of attracting members to his congregation; of such acts his nature was incapable:—nor by the dazzling brilliancy of rhetorical

display; for he was above the vulgar artifices for catching the eyes or tickling the ears of a promiscuous assembly: but by the manly sense and kindly feeling which pervaded his pulpit compositions; by their practical adaptation to the great interests of humanity which brought them home to men's business and bosoms; by their evangelical and scriptural simplicity, which left the reflecting hearer no other alternative, but either to receive the preacher's lessons, or to cast off the Gospel on which they were founded; by the manifest sincerity and pleasing union of simple earnestness and true dignity, becoming his sacred calling, with which they were delivered; and above all, by the weight which his personal character lent to all his ministrations:—for even when he preached the strictest rules of duty, no man could point to the slightest inconsistency between his lessons and his life.

In his general preaching, Dr. Bruce was not controversial. He chiefly dwelt on topics which were calculated to expand the soul of man with benevolence to his kind, and raise it in devotion to God. He agreed with many eminent and pious men in thinking that the disputed points of theology should be withdrawn as much as possible from the public services of the house of prayer. His religious services were always founded upon, and consistent with, his own peculiar views of truth; and he always set forth the doctrines of the Gospel in the light in which they presented themselves to his own mind; but the opinions held by other Christians, he very seldom formally impugned; nor did he think the examination of their arguments in support of them, the most profitable mode of employing the attention of a Christian congregation on the Lord's Day. This was the course which he on principle preferred: and from which he never deviated without regret, and under a sense of painful necessity. But when he perceived that he must either enter into controversy, or abandon the interests of what he regarded as the cause of truth, he did not allow himself to be deterred by any feelings of personal reluctance from performing the task to which he felt himself called by Providence.* This was the origin of his admirable volume of Ser-

* "In these controversial times, individuals and societies are called upon to make their sentiments known; and a minister may deem it his duty to his people to explain himself in a form more precise and permanent than oral instruction. This is particularly expedient in those who profess free inquiry; and adopt neither creed nor confession, articles of faith, nor doctrinal catechism, but the word of God alone."—*Dedication of his Sermons.*

"I hope and trust that I have done with controversy. It was forced upon me, in advanced age, by the peculiar character of the times. Having reluctantly exposed our differences, I wish, for the future, to dwell upon points in which we agree; and, to one who reflects on the important doctrines in which we coincide, our dissensions are equally a subject of wonder and regret."—*Postscript to the 2nd edition.*

mons on the Doctrines of Christianity — the first *printed* avowal and defence of Unitarian opinions, in Ireland, as I believe, certainly in this part of Ireland, since the time of Emlyn.* This volume is one of the few works of controversy in which the Christian predominates over the polemic; it is equally characterized by firmness in maintaining the author's own sentiments, and mildness and candour towards persons holding opposite views. Its leading doctrine has been approved by many inquiring minds; but its publication was the cause or the pretext for the withdrawal of a considerable number of persons from his ministry. This, I believe, he had foreseen; but he conceived that duty required the sacrifice, and he made it without a murmur. I am probably addressing many persons who differ from him and from me very widely in religious doctrine; but I am persuaded there is no honest man in this assembly — whatever he may think of Dr. Bruce's sentiments — who will not approve of the manly zeal and integrity which he displayed in thus stepping forth in their defence.

About ten years ago, he was obliged, by the failure of his sight, to retire from the active duties of the ministry. † The feelings which, upon that occasion, were mutually expressed by the pastor and the people, are still enshrined in the hearts of many who are here pre-

* These sermons were published at Belfast, in one volume, 8vo, in the year 1824. A second and improved edition appeared in 1826. From the publication of this work may be dated the formation of the present Unitarian body in Ireland. Individuals had embraced, and sometimes orally advocated and defended Unitarian opinions previously; Dr. Bruce himself had done so more than once; but such instances were rare: the persons so acting were connected by no tie, nor united by any general profession of agreement. At present, not only is there a respectable Unitarian body, but a zealous and hearty co-operation among the members; for which, next to the violence of opponents, they are indebted to the advocacy of their religious doctrines by Dr. Bruce, Mr. Mitchell, Dr. Armstrong, and others whom it is unnecessary and would be indelicate to name.

It can hardly be needful to observe, that, while the Unitarian denomination in Ireland holds in sincere and grateful respect the memory of the three eminent men who were named above,—and especially that of Dr. Bruce,—none of them is looked upon as a standard or rule to their fellow-believers. They differed from each other in some points; and other Unitarians may, if they see cause, differ from them all. Yet there is no difference respecting what they all held in common, and what they all regarded as most important in their respective systems. 1st, Religious liberty in the church, subject only to the authority of scripture. 2nd, The absolute unity of God, the sole Deity of the Father, and the subordination and inferiority of the Son, to God the Father who sent him. And, 3dly, The essential and inherent benevolence of the God and Father of all.

† The Rev. William Bruce, M.A. had been ordained as co-pastor and colleague to his father, on the 3d of March, 1812.

On the retirement of Dr. Bruce from pastoral duty, affectionate addresses were presented to him by the Presbytery of Antrim, and by the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast; in which he had laboured for forty-one years. These addresses will be found in the *Bible Christian*, First Series, vol. II. page 47, and 239. The members of the congregation farther took occasion to express their feelings towards their venerated friend and pastor, by presenting him with a service of plate, with a suitable inscription. The proceedings on this occasion will be found in the same volume, page 284-8. The reply then delivered by Dr. Bruce is perhaps the most striking and impressive of all

sent; and I need not dwell upon circumstances which, I trust, those who took part in them will never forget.

While speaking of his ministerial character, I am naturally led to advert to his usefulness as a member of the Presbytery of Antrim, and of the other religious bodies with which he was at different times connected. In all of them, his clearness of judgment gave him great influence; and for many years, he was looked up to, by his co-presbyters, as a guide in all matters of consequence. His counsels were always on the side of peace, moderation, and brotherly love. He largely partakes in the credit due to our religious society for the harmony by which it has been so long distinguished. He was a judicious adviser and friend to the younger ministers, in whose labours and success he ever felt a warm interest. Many of our congregations owe to his suggestions and influence, important advantages; and the respect in which he was held enabled him, on more than one occasion, to be of essential service to the dissenting interest in this kingdom.

Dr. Bruce was not desirous of being constantly engaged in political contests; but he never forgot that he was the citizen of a free country, and on occasions which appeared to demand his services,

his *published* compositions. Contrary to my original intention, I am tempted to extract the following passages.

"Dear and honoured friends,—you have released me from your service, laden with honours and rewards, according well with your kind and liberal character; but wholly disproportioned to my deserts. These, I can truly say, have seldom been estimated more lowly by any one than myself. * * But under a deep sense of manifold imperfections, I have supported myself with the consciousness, that, during a long life, I have uniformly adhered to my ruling principles—the maintenance of civil and religious liberty, and the vindication of gospel truth, to the best of my ability and knowledge. These principles you have recognised as mine, and most justly claim as your own; and in the assertion of them in the most trying times, I gratefully acknowledge that I have been zealously supported and animated by my people. * * * *

"Particular churches may flourish or decay, doctrines may be extinguished and revive,—but our fundamental principles, the sufficiency of scripture, and the right of private judgment,—the rejection of human authority, and universal charity, are unchangeable, and have been espoused by the most enlightened portion of society; and our doctrinal opinions are spreading far and wide among intelligent people in every church.

"There is a great work going on: and we are the only denomination of Christians at liberty to hail and promote its progress,—unshackled by human creeds, unawed by priestly domination and spiritual power. That man must stop his ears, close his eyes, and stultify his mind, who does not perceive the promise and progress of a great moral and religious improvement in the condition of the world. Who, even the youngest amongst us, could, a few years ago, have hoped to see, in the course of a long life, what has already taken place? And what experienced person has not observed, that one step facilitates another? * * * * *

"Consider yourselves, my beloved friends, as appointed to act a distinguished part in this wonderful series of events:—as a link in the chain that will finally draw earth to heaven. Meanwhile, be ye not conformed to the world; for the world is coming round to you: and those who forsake you will be despised and forsaken in their turn. Finally, brethren, farewell:—be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace, and the God of love and peace be with you. Amen."

he made no scruple of stepping forth to assert his political opinions, and to act upon them strenuously. He was a member of the old Volunteer Association, and sat as delegate from the town of Carrickfergus at the celebrated National Convention held in Dublin, in 1783, for declaring the sentiments of the body upon the state of the nation, and especially upon religious liberty.* And upon several other occasions, he acted with equal decision in support of his own views. In the disastrous æra of 1797 and 1798, he strenuously, though unsuccessfully, exerted himself to put his countrymen on their guard against the rising spirit of insurrection. In times of tumult and agitation, when violent passions were aroused, his counsels might not be approved by those against whose principles they were directed, and doubtless, his conduct must have given offence to some; but it is certain that he always maintained what to him appeared to be the cause of law, liberty, and good government; and many who were once opposed to him, on account of the exertions to which I am referring, will now be ready to admit that time has justified the soundness of his views, and the wisdom of his advice.

It is needless to speak of Dr. Bruce as a writer.† His numerous publications on history, literature, science, and theology, survive to speak for themselves. Nor do I feel it necessary to advert to his

* Of this celebrated convention he was the last survivor.

† The following is believed to be a tolerably correct list of Dr. Bruce's publications:—

1. The Christian Soldier; a Sermon, 12mo, 1803.
2. Essay on the Influence of Political Revolutions on the Progress of Religion and Learning.
3. Memoir on the Advantages of Classical Education, 4to, 1811.
4. Meteorological Observations. 4to, 1811. (*The last three papers appeared in the Transactions of the Belfast Literary Society, of which Dr. Bruce was the founder.*)
5. Essay on Church Government. (In the Appendix to *Towgood's Dissenting Gentleman's Letters:* Newry, 1816, 12mo.)
6. A Treatise on the Being and Attributes of God, with an Appendix on the Immateriality of the Soul, 8vo, 1818.
7. Sermons on the Study of the Bible, and the Doctrines of Christianity, as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ, 8vo, 1824. (A second and improved edition was published also in 8vo, in 1826.)
8. The State of Society in the Age of Homer, post 8vo, 1827.
9. Essay on Non-subscription to Creeds. (In the *Christian Moderator* for 1826-7.)
10. Memoir of K. James VI. of Scotland, and I. of England, with copies of Original Letters. (*Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy for* 1828.)
11. Remarks on the History of Rome. (In the *Dublin University Magazine* for 1833.)
12. Essays, Reviews, and Criticisms, under the signatures of Erasmus and Nemo. (In the first series of the *Bible Christian*, from 1831—1836.)
13. Brief Notes on the Gospels and Acts, 12mo. 1835.
14. A Paraphrase, with Brief Notes on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 12mo, 1836.
15. A Brief Commentary on the New Testament, 12mo, 1838. (Includes the two preceding.)
16. Essay on the Prosody and Rhythm of the English Language, and the Laws of Versification. (In the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy for 1839.)

Besides a number of Reviews, Letters, and Essays, which appeared in various publications.

character in the more private relations of life:—as a husband and father, or as an attached and steady friend. I am addressing persons who knew him well—and loved him; and observations on these topics would be thrown away. His sound and varied scholarship, his high talents, his proved sagacity in the management of affairs,—all these would afford matter for copious observation. The zeal with which he devoted himself to the service of the public charities of this town, and the benefit which they derived from his exertions,—the readiness with which he responded to every appeal to his liberality,—the enlarged and catholic spirit which marked his social intercourse,—all these are well known to you. His disinterestedness I cannot refrain from mentioning; for, not to speak of others who largely experienced it, a most convincing proof of it was given in relation to myself, by his resigning in my favour, as his assistant in the ministry, the whole of the professional income which belonged to him, as the senior pastor of this congregation,—a sacrifice as unexpected on my part as it was generous on his; and, I believe, unexampled in our Presbyterian church.

There is one circumstance more which I must not pass over,—his conduct under the severe deprivation, occasioned by the failure, and ultimately, the almost total loss of sight.

When we consider that Dr. Bruce was, by education and long habit, a literary man,—that, for many years, the greater part of every day had been spent in reading or in composition,—we can form some conception of the change in his habits and pursuits which this loss must have occasioned; nor could we have been surprised if his mind had felt some difficulty in reconciling itself to the alteration. But so far was the change from producing any appearance or feeling of dissatisfaction, that his latter years were even more clearly marked by the free manifestation of his social and cheerful spirit than his earlier life had been. The kind interest which he took in his friends, their families, and their prospects, became still more conspicuous than it had ever been before. He afforded one of those rare examples in which age strengthens rather than weakens the social sympathies. When he found the malady which affected his vision increasing upon him, he at once accommodated himself to his lot; accustomed himself to receive the assistance from others which became necessary; by the aid of a reader and amanuensis, he still pursued his favourite studies; composed, in this manner, a number of moral, literary, and critical essays, which have appeared in various publications; and prepared

for the press an excellent selection of notes upon the New Testament, — one of the most valuable, and, considering the circumstances under which it was produced, the most extraordinary of his works. The outward eye was dim; but the "intellectual light shone inward." His mental faculties were spared to him almost till the last moment of his existence. A periodical work published on the 1st of this month contains a criticism which he dictated, upon a passage of scripture which had given rise to some discussion in a previous number:* this must have been composed a week or two before his death. Thus, in the assiduous care of domestic tenderness,—in the constant exercise of his own kindly affections, in the pleasure arising from literary pursuits, in the devout contemplations of religion, and in the consciousness of continued usefulness to his fellow-christians,— he enjoyed a perennial spring of happiness. He could look upon the past, and feel that he had not lived in vain; to the future, his religious views enabled him to look forward with a cheerful trust; and, dying at last in honoured age, he calmly resigned his breath to him who gave it, with the composed serenity which became a sincere Christian and a pious minister of the gospel,—leaving behind him a recollection of his virtues and an esteem for his character, which will never be effaced from the minds of those who knew him; and, in his valuable writings, a monument of his piety, learning, and ability, which, I trust, will long outlive our children's children.

His removal will be felt as a weighty loss, not only by his family and his more intimate friends, but by the whole of the religious connexion of which he was the ornament. His character procured respect to our Christian denomination. Men thought of it with reverence, and even when they did not so feel, were constrained to express themselves of it in terms of moderation, when they reflected that it numbered him among its adherents. But, especially, did this worshipping society derive support and strength from being able to look up to him as its venerated pastor. The title by which it was known as *Dr. Bruce's Congregation*, was regarded by ourselves, and by others, as a title of honour. In his departure, we have suffered a loss which it would ill become us to undervalue.

Yet we follow him not to the tomb with vain tears, nor with the language of clamorous lamentation. Our kind friend, our revered pastor, has been taken from us; but he has been taken to his rest, in

* See an Explanation and Paraphrase on Joshua xxiv. 19 — 21, in the *Christian Reformer*, New Series, vol. VIII. page 146.

advanced age, full of honour and of usefulness, full of faith, and hope, and charity. We bless our Merciful King that he was spared the suffering of many of the griefs and pains, which often accompany old age, and precede dissolution. We know that to him it was far better to depart and to be with Christ. And, with an unhesitating faith in a merciful acceptance, we resign him to the God who was pleased to spare him to us in life and usefulness so long. He had fought the good fight; he had gloriously finished his career; he is gone to receive the garland of righteousness at the hands of his Saviour and his God. We resign him without a murmur or a fear; for we hope to meet again, at that blessed hour and happy home, when "the righteous will shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father:" "they that be wise, as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." *

Then, farewell! beloved and venerated friend, farewell! Well hast thou fulfilled thy task: gloriously hast thou accomplished thy career. Farewell! farewell, till the morning whose dawning ray shall pierce through the clouds and darkness of the tomb,—till the moment when the archangel's trumpet shall awaken them that sleep in dust to life and immortality! Farewell, till that triumphant day when "death shall be swallowed up in victory:"—"when Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe:"† the blessed hour, when faithful pastors shall be reunited to the flocks that have heard the voice of "the Good Shepherd:" when the friends who have parted here shall meet to part no more: and the friendships of a moment shall become the friendships of eternity!

A character combining so many admirable qualities as that of the man whose life and labours have now been briefly and imperfectly described, is full of instruction to various classes of persons.

His posterity will ever bear in mind the virtues of their ancestor now departed. Another name has been added to the list of their many progenitors who were eminent for piety and virtue:—a name not unworthy to be associated with those which precede it in the honourable catalogue. Ill would it become the descendants of such a line to degenerate from the noble examples which their own family affords, or to bring disgrace upon the name which has been transmitted to them through so many generations of men illustrious for their adherence to the cause of conscience and of God.

But the usefulness of such a character is not confined to the nar-

* Matt. xiii. 43. Dan. xii. 3. † 2 Tim. i. 10.

row circle of one family alone:—it extends to us all; and far beyond the persons who are assembled within these walls:—it reaches to every one who knew Dr. Bruce, or who, in any manner, was acquainted with his character. I may fearlessly hold him to view as an example worthy of imitation. That he may have had his imperfections, I pretend not to deny. The real greatness and undoubted merits of his character can well afford an admission of the frailty and imperfection which he shared in common with the whole human family. But still, in his prevailing tenour of life, he was a man to be admired and followed; for he was pious without ostentation; conscientious, without austerity; and pure, without asceticism:—he was singularly benevolent, yet without allowing his feelings to usurp the seat of reason:—he was upright, consistent, and sincere: he was of a nature most charitable and forbearing; tolerant of errors which he did not share; and indulgent to weaknesses of which he did not partake. Such men are rare in this world of frivolity and folly, and, alas! too often, of vice and selfishness. But they shew to their fellow-beings of what their nature is capable, and may be held forth as guides and patterns to those who are to come after them in the paths of life's pilgrimage. Let us, my brethren, endeavour to profit by the example of the wise and the worthy who have gone before. Let us not be slothful, "but followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."* Every such example is a precious talent committed to our trust, which we may use, or neglect, or pervert, as we may feel disposed; but let us remember, that, for our mode of employing it, we shall give account. Let us beware, lest any such rise up against us in the judgment to condemn us; and may we all be enabled to avoid contamination from the evil which we may witness, and to profit by the good. Notwithstanding the sin that is in the world, we have all had many splendid instances of human virtue before our eyes, and that of our departed friend among the number. May it produce its due effect in inciting us to the love of holiness,—and arming us against the follies and temptations of this vain world!

The Unitarian body, in particular, which has derived so much benefit from his labours, and has always looked up to him with so much respect, may well be expected to make the example of his virtues their model. In many points, their position exposes them to peculiar dangers, which our lamented friend, by his firmness and

* Heb. vi. 12.

wisdom, was enabled to escape; and, in these respects, they would do well to learn from his conduct through life how they may walk securely. As a new denomination, we are subject to much obloquy and misrepresentation, and are sometimes tempted to retort in the language of invective. On such occasions we may learn from his example, not to give back railing for railing; but, in meekness of love, to endeavour to persuade those who pour upon us unmerited contempt. As a body of persons at present not numerous, compared with those who profess the more popular creeds, we are sometimes placed under an inducement to conceal our opinions, or hesitate in the avowal of our conscientious convictions. Let us learn a lesson of manly and Christian candour from the behaviour of our illustrious friend. His opinions, though at no time concealed, were never put so prominently forward as at the very time when the avowal was most dangerous to his popularity and influence. There is another danger to which we are peculiarly exposed: that of a false liberality; which, —because it has learned that God will not condemn any conscientious man on account of opinions which he sincerely embraces and entertains,—treats truth and falsehood as matters of indifference, and makes no scruple of adopting whatever profession may appear most suitable to worldly interest, passion, vanity, or caprice. No man more consistently raised his protest against the doctrine of exclusive salvation in all its multitudinous forms, than Dr. Bruce: and yet no man who knew him ever could believe that he would, for the wealth of worlds, have departed from, or abandoned one jot or one tittle of the law, or one of the least important points of what he seriously believed to be the solemn truth of God. I am afraid there are Unitarians who have need of such an example: and I think it my duty to put that of my lamented friend in particular, plainly before the eyes of all, —that they may see, that they may learn, that they may imitate.

The congregations belonging to our connexion may derive, from the retrospect which has now been taken, a useful caution with respect to the qualifications and attainments most desirable in those whom they may call to labour among them in the word and doctrine. Of zeal, and benevolence, and integrity, and holiness and piety, I need say nothing; for I trust the necessity of these endowments is universally recognised. But these essential qualities may be found associated with others which differ widely among themselves: and I think I have observed indications of a tendency to prefer for the pastoral office, those shewy gifts of rhetorical display which are calculated to strike

and charm the hearer at the moment, to the more solid but less brilliant qualifications of a sober and well-disciplined judgment, exact scholarship, and sound theological learning. Both classes of qualities have their use: and I am far from undervaluing the importance of a rich and fertile imagination, a pleasing manner and address, and a ready flow of extemporaneous eloquence,—in him who is to impress upon his fellow-creatures the truths and the awful sanctions of religion. But still these, without the other requisites, are little more than "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." It is to the scholars of our church in generations past, that we now look back with the most of reverence and gratitude:—to our Bensons, our Lelands, our Lardners, our Taylors, our Emylns, our Prices, and our Priestleys:—to the men of that class with which our departed friend well deserved to be ranked. And it is to such men, that our churches must ever look forward for the effectual defence of their principles, the exposure of prevalent errors, and the extensive propagation of the truth. I should augur ill indeed for the present success of our great and holy cause, if theological attainments and sound scholarship should unhappily ever come to be practically undervalued amongst us.

To the ministers who hold in general the same religious sentiments with the eminent man who is now gone to his rest, his history will afford a lesson respecting the mode by which they may best attain at once professional usefulness and reputation. He was, while among us, as a burning and a shining light; and his example may still be to us as a beacon to guide us through the shoals and quicksands that beset our ministerial course. We may especially learn the vast accession of usefulness which a minister of religion will ever acquire by a steady, consistent, and blameless life:—by preaching to his people in his daily walk and conversation, as well as in his sabbath-ministrations. And while this lesson of his life produces its due effect upon our hearts, let the impression left by his departure from the field of labour in which we are engaged, be a motive to zeal, fidelity, and perseverance in the work of the mission with which we are entrusted. It will require all the energy and activity which we, who now remain, can throw into our discharge of the duties of our office, to compensate for the losses sustained by the removal of so many gifted and eminent men as have lately been called from among us. This admonition, which, in no spirit of presumption, I venture to suggest to all my brethren in the ministry, I feel to be particularly applicable to the Unitarian ministers of Belfast, and more

especially to my respected colleague and to myself. We are not only engaged in the same general task, but in the same station which he filled so long, and with such pre-eminent success. Treading, at an humble distance, in the steps of such a man, we feel all the responsibility of our situation. And now that we have lost the support and sanction which we possessed in the circumstance of his name being associated with our cause, and with our labours, we may well perceive the necessity of redoubled exertion in the fulfilment of the arduous task to which we have devoted ourselves in this place.

Let me remind you also, my beloved friends—the members of this congregation—of the responsibility under which you are placed, by having so long enjoyed the privilege of the instructions and example of such a minister. By him you have had the principles of Christian liberty, gospel truth, and evangelical holiness, clearly stated and powerfully enforced upon your minds. You have all, at times, felt the force of his appeals; and your spirits have been deeply moved by the admonitions which he delivered to you. The tongue which thus addressed you is silent now: you hear it not on earth again; but in the memory of his instructions, and in the published records of his teachings, there is a voice by which you may hear him still, and by which he being dead yet speaketh. My beloved friends, let not the lessons of your venerated pastor die away as an unmeaning sound from your ears. Remember that you have enjoyed in his ministrations a choice treasure, which you are called on to improve; and show, by the consistent integrity of your lives, by your firm adherence to the cause of Christian truth, and by your zeal in the promotion of religious freedom,—that it has not been lent to you in vain. Thus can you best testify the respect in which you hold his memory, and that gratitude which you feel to God for his labours and services among you.

I venture, on this occasion, to throw out a reflection addressed to my fellow-christians who belong to other denominations, but who are this day present with us, in order to show their esteem and regard for the person whose loss has occasioned this address. You differ from us, and you differed from him, in points of religious doctrine. You esteemed his principles erroneous, but you loved and valued himself personally as a man; and many of you found in him a kind and affectionate friend. Extend to us the same measure of forbearance and allowance which he and you mutually granted to each other. You regard us as mistaken, and we regard you in the same

light. But let us not impeach each other's motives, nor depreciate each other's characters, nor deny each other's sincerity. You allow, you must allow, that the man whose memory you have here assembled to honour, was upright and conscientious in his Christian profession. Do not, therefore, permit yourselves to suppose, nor suffer others to declare in your presence, unrebuked, that what you regard as an erroneous belief is necessarily connected with impurity of motive; for you know that, in one case at least, no such connexion existed. Nay, I might even point to the character of our departed friend as calculated to remove much of the odium with which our religious doctrines, in themselves considered, are so commonly regarded. Here was a man who had no reason to influence him to adopt and profess our sentiments, except what was furnished by the conviction of their truth:—a man who had learning and opportunity for deeply investigating the principles of our common faith:—a man of clear, firm, and vigorous mind:—not prone to be carried away by the love of novelty, for all his tendencies were to the opposite side:—not one of those who are given to change for the sake of change, nor of those who are ever learning, but never able to arrive at fixed and permanent principle; for his clear and vigorous mind was well qualified for seizing upon the truth, and retaining it with firm grasp. It will be allowed by all that Dr. Bruce was such a man, and yet he was a Unitarian,—a firm, decided, and consistent Unitarian; who manfully avowed and ably maintained his opinions as such; and who found in them the comfort, the strength, the peace of mind and conscience, which it is the best office of true religion to inspire. Surely such an example may abate much of the rancour and intolerance with which the profession of Unitarian opinions is commonly regarded by those who hold a different faith. I might appeal to the candid of all sects and parties, to determine whether the faith which contributed to form and perfect such a character, can deserve the censures and invectives with which the mention of it is so frequently accompanied, and the evil epithets with which its name is too often associated. I ask you, my Christian friends, when you behold such a man the advocate of such a system, is it not reasonable to hear, before you condemn it? It may, at least, abide the application of one of the tests which have been given us for distinguishing true from false representations of religion; namely, "By their fruits ye shall know them." "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.",

I am well aware that observations of the kind which I have made in this discourse would be completely out of place in an address called forth by the occurrence of any ordinary instance of mortality. But the present is no common occasion. Our departed friend was no common man. He occupied a distinguished station in our church, and an eminent position in society; and I am not afraid that any person will accuse me of having introduced any remarks which the character of the man, and the circumstances of the case, will not fully warrant. In my own mind, I not only feel myself justified in all the observations which I have now brought forward, but, viewing the case as it presents itself to me, I should not have felt myself justified in suppressing them.

I conclude by expressing my fervent wish and prayer, that we may all be enabled to profit by the lessons which we have received from the life, the labours, and the death of this eminent servant of God:—to employ faithfully all the means of edification provided for us by our Almighty Ruler, in his word and providence:—and so to conduct ourselves, that, when our course is finished, we may receive "the crown of righteousness with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will requite all them that have loved his appearing."

And unto God be the praise and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE END.

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A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

LEWIN'S MEAD CHAPEL, BRISTOL,

ON

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 1840,

ON OCCASION OF THE LAMENTED DEATH OF

THE REV. LANT CARPENTER, LL.D.

BY

JOSEPH HUTTON, LL.D.

LONDON:

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1840.

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TO

THE MOURNING WIDOW, AND FAMILY,

COLLEAGUE, AND CONGREGATION,

OF HIS

REVERED AND LAMENTED FRIEND,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,

PREACHED AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND SERVANT,

JOSEPH HUTTON.

LONDON, MAY, 1840.

A SERMON,

&c.

LESSONS.

Psalm xxxix.—1 Thess. iv. 13 to 1 Thess. v. 25.

HYMNS.

God of the Sabbath! hear our vows!—Doddridge.
Hear what the voice from Heaven proclaims.—Watts.
Though earthly shepherds dwell in dust.—Doddridge.

My Christian Friends and Brethren,

A faithful servant of our common Lord, a good soldier of the cross, a father in our Israel has fallen; not,—as he might perhaps have wished for himself, not as we who loved him, in our ignorance of the deep counsels of God, might have wished for him,—on the field of his public spiritual warfare, engaged in the active duties of his profession; but in an hour of involuntary inaction, when disease had compelled him to seek rest for a body and a mind exhausted, as you are well aware, by exertions only too unremitted, by labours in season and out of season, for what he

deemed the cause of God, and Christ, and truth, and virtue. In the hope of recruiting his worn-out strength, and preparing himself to return once more to that post of duty which he never liked to leave, and the toils of which, so long as he could endure them, were pleasant and dear to him for his great master's sake, he was seeking health for his body and repose for his mind, in foreign travel, when it pleased God suddenly to remove him, in a manner which there was no human eye to witness, and of which no human tongue therefore can confidently speak. All we know is, that our dear friend embarked on board a vessel bound from Naples to Leghorn, that the night was stormy, that he was last seen between the hours of ten and eleven, and that in the morning he was no longer numbered amongst the crew. By the action of the winds there seems every reason to believe that his weakened frame was consigned to the waters; in some violent lurch of the vessel we may readily suppose him to have been detached from it; and thus—in conformity with a wish of the celebrated Robert Robinson, which he was wont when in health to repeat with interest—to have passed hence to his Maker, "suddenly, silently, and alone." During his latter illness, when by God's unsearchable wisdom he was deprived of that inward strength which would have borne his spirit cheerfully up, our friend, his

family inform me, had a morbid fear of death.* How full of mercy and love, then, may this dispensation have been, which abridged the duration of that fear, and gave him, after a momentary struggle, into the arms of his Father and his God! No more attempting, however, to lift that veil which it has pleased God to drop over the last scene of our friend's life, we will merely console ourselves, in passing, with the thought that he is not the first of the great and good of whose sepulchre and mode of death "no man knoweth," and pass on at once to what is of infinitely greater importance, the moral and religious improvement of the lesson which He who gave and hath taken away would now impress upon our hearts.

The mode of *life*, our friend himself always taught, is more to be thought of than the manner

* Subsequent conversation with the gentleman who travelled with Dr. C., and also with his family and his intimate friend and medical adviser, Mr. Estlin, has led me to the belief that the impressions, under which this statement was made, were without adequate foundation. When in health Dr. C. was remarkable for the calmness, and even cheerfulness, with which he contemplated death. "When Thou wilt—what Thou wilt—how Thou wilt," was his often repeated expression, and the constant language, I feel persuaded, of his heart: but in the depressed state of his spirits, arising from too great exertion and consequent exhaustion, he dwelt occasionally on his want of faithfulness in the fulfilment of duty, and seemed to shrink from the thought of giving up the account of an "unprofitable servant" to the great Judge of all. It is to this fact that reference is made above, in terms, as it now appears to me, unwarrantably strong.

of *departure*. "He has left them higher consolation"—(says Channing of Gallison, in a passage which we find marked in our friend's copy)—"than a dying testimony, even the memory of a blameless and well-spent life." And surely this may be said of Carpenter also. He was, in my opinion, if ever man was, a diligent labourer in the harvest and the vineyard,—a brave and well-armed soldier in the field. What was the first wish of his heart? Was it not to sanctify himself that you also might be sanctified through the truth?—to labour himself, and incite and assist you to labour with him? —to fight the good fight himself, and supply you with armour, and inflame your minds with holy courage, that you might join him in fighting it? I see his sons before me, engaged in the good work to which he was, I think I may truly say, devoted in heart and soul. I see before me many of his spiritual children, old and young, on every one of whom (for he recognized no sex in souls, no distinction of lay and clerical in this respect,) he would have impressed the sacred duty of labouring in their several stations to the same end, and acting on the conviction that we are all of us, without exception, engaged in the same needful work—that of working out our joint salvation: our *joint* salvation, I say, for are we not all members one of another under one head?—and if one member suffer, must not all the members suffer

with it?—and if one member rejoice, must not all the members rejoice with it? Anxiously, painfully reflecting, then, on the topic of my present address, and solicitous to testify my respect and affection for the dead by being profitable to the living, I know not that I can do any thing better, or more appropriate, than submit to your candid attention some reflections grounded on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, vi. 13,—"WHEREFORE TAKE UNTO YOU THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND IN THE EVIL DAY, AND HAVING DONE ALL TO STAND."

Our friend, at the bidding of the Sovereign Lord, has laid down his armour; it is for us, if we have not already done so, to take up ours, or, if happily we have taken it up, to bear it manfully, and use it bravely, till *we* shall be permitted to exchange the warrior's armour for the victor's crown. The epistle, in which the words of our text occur, was written by the Apostle (and does not this circumstance render them still more appropriate for our present purpose?) during his last imprisonment, not long before the conclusion of his course of active and energetic virtue. "There is a peculiar dignity and sublimity in this epistle," says Dr. Priestley, "as well as the strongest marks of the most earnest affection for those to whom he writes; and the same has been observed of all the epistles which he wrote from Rome. He pro-

bably knew that he was near the close of his life; of a long and laborious warfare, as it might be called, in the cause of Christianity, of the great value of which he was fully sensible. He therefore wrote with that energy with which a man may be supposed to give his last admonitions to those he loves, respecting their most important interests." In the Epistle to Philemon, which was written at the same time, and sent by the same messengers, he describes himself as "Paul the aged, a prisoner of Jesus Christ," and in the second Epistle to Timothy, written probably at a somewhat later period of the same imprisonment, he enforces perseverance and patience on his youthful friend by the consideration, that his own course of active exertion was nearly terminated, and that he was soon to be called to the enjoyment of that unspeakable reward, to which he was benevolently anxious that all his fellow-labourers should aspire and attain. "But watch thou in all things," says he, "endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry; for I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."

The exhortation of our text, then, did not proceed, as such exhortations often do, from the lips of a mere theorist, of one who was contented to point the road he had never travelled, to persuade others to do what he had never done: far from it, —Paul could testify, from his own experience, the value of the advice which he gave. The rough and thorny path into which he directed others, he had himself trodden through its whole length: the armour which he exhorted them to assume, he had himself worn and proved in many a well-fought field. As a veteran soldier of the cross, of tried fidelity, whom, from the moment that his post was assigned to him, fear had never been able to terrify, or favour to seduce, Paul was authorized, in a degree that few followers of Christ have ever been, to exhort and rebuke with authority. From no lips could the exhortation "to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand," have proceeded with a better grace.

When the young and inexperienced assume, as they are sometimes inevitably called to do, the instructor's office, though their qualifications should equal those of a Timothy or a Titus, much modesty is required to render their exhortations palatable, and they must trust, after all, much more to the intrinsic excellence of their doctrine, and the force of their arguments, than to the weight of their authority. When Paul counselled his two young

friends, as he did, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, and to let no man despise them, we may conclude that he not only knew them to be endowed with spiritual wisdom beyond their years, but also adapted his advice to their peculiar characters, and from his knowledge of their abounding modesty, thought it right to impress upon them the necessity of a due degree of confidence. They were probably, as the young ought always to be, "swift to hear and slow to speak," and the Apostle therefore knew that he might safely and profitably exhort them to be "apt to teach." Had they been of an opposite character, naturally inclined to "magnify their office," and to assume a greater degree of dignity than their age and experience warranted, there cannot be a doubt that his advice would have been different. "I am young," said Elihu to Job and his friends, "and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion. I said days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." Who is there that does not approve of this graceful modesty?—who that does not feel, with Elihu, that the words of truth and wisdom justly prevail with double sway when they come from the lips of age. "With the ancient is wisdom." "Let not him that putteth on his armour boast himself as he that putteth it off." Reverently, then, my friends, let us listen to the exhortations of Paul the aged,—of him who had

verified by his personal experience every word that he uttered,—of him who had fought that good fight, to which, with a veteran's unquenched ardour, he now cheered on his younger comrades. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all—(having subdued all opposition)—to stand."

"*Wherefore:*" the reason or motive for the advice given, to which this word refers, we find in the preceding verses. "Finally, my brethren," says the Apostle, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high—(literally heavenly)—places." In other words, as this passage has been, I think, justly explained by some excellent critics and commentators,—"Our contest is not with flesh and blood, with mere private individuals of low degree, whom we could readily confute at least, if not convince, and who could not long oppose any effective opposition to the moral force of evidence and argument, which we have it in our power to bring to bear upon them —but it is with 'principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world,'—with

heathen magistrates, that is, who are interested to perpetuate the gloomy reign of superstition and idolatry in the countries over which they rule; and with 'spiritual wickedness in heavenly places,' or, in other words, with Jewish priests and rulers, who, though they have a dispensation from above to administer, have grievously corrupted it, and employ their spiritual authority and influence for the worst purposes. Wherefore, since such is your arduous task, since you have to struggle not merely with individuals, whom you might have little difficulty in overcoming singly, but with powerful bodies of men, closely united by common interests, enjoying all the influence which exalted station usually gives, and impelled by the strongest worldly motives to resist you, neglect no needful or desirable precaution; make diligent preparation for your work of love; take unto you the whole armour of God." The apostle clearly perceived, what must indeed be obvious to every reflecting mind, that the contest with error, whether theoretical or practical, is rendered much more difficult by its association with wealth, and power, and worldly influence of whatsoever species. Over falsehood unpatronised and unendowed, truth gains an easy victory; but when the adoption of opinions, or the adherence to customs or habits of any kind, is closely connected with the gratification of avarice, ambition, or any other worldly

passion, their hold upon the human mind is proportionally strengthened, and the difficulty of dislodging them of course increased.

To adhere firmly to the cause of truth and virtue, when they are out of place and out of fashion, requires a greater effort than many are willing to make. Had it not been for the powerful hierarchies, Pagan as well as Jewish, by which the rise and progress of the infant Church of Christ were opposed, there cannot be a doubt that its triumph would have been much more rapid: nor is it less certain that in modern days the cause of pure and undefiled religion would prosper greatly, if, without attempting to favour, the powers that be would only draw off their forces, and leave it a fair field. Whatever is, is doubtless right: whatever has been, has been for wise and sufficient reasons: it is a fact, however, which cannot be disputed, that the progress of truth has been a little delayed, and the task of its advocates rendered greatly more arduous, by powerful combinations of interest with error to prevent or retard its advancement. "We will establish and endow our own truth," the powers that be have often said, and in some instances, I readily admit, in pure good faith; but, alas, their own truth, it has generally happened, has not been deserving of the name (whose truth indeed is so, save that of God which we are still searching for?) and the consequence of establishing it therefore has

been to keep the real truth away. Why this has been permitted, it is not for us to determine; God only knows, and if it seem good to him He will cause us to know hereafter. In the mean time let us pause before we attempt to *establish* any thing of ours: what God sees to be good He will establish, or cause to establish itself: and let us console ourselves moreover with the hope, well expressed by an eloquent writer, the late Robert Hall, of holy and happy memory, that "the conquest achieved by just and enlightened principles will be firm and durable in proportion to the tardiness of their progress." Certain it is, that pure and undefiled religion, from the earliest period of society down to the present day, has always had formidable foes to struggle with,—that the great, the wealthy, and the wise of this world have seldom been on her side,—that her cause has almost always been unpopular, and often persecuted,—opposed frequently with equal bitterness by the influential few, and by the prejudiced and thoughtless many.

In the patriarchal age there were but few that walked with God: under the law the servants of the Most High met with no friendly reception from those to whom they were sent,—Jerusalem killed the Prophets, and cast forth from her bosom, and crucified the Son of God: and even the Gospel dispensation hitherto has failed to produce its genuine fruits. As its great Giver clearly foresaw and pre-

dicted, these have been of slow growth. Piety, benevolence, and self-government are still thinly scattered even in Christendom. Here and there they may spring up and flourish in the bosoms of individuals; but the great communities of men display but little of their influence, and the impartial spectator would probably regard the present state of things in the nominally Christian world as more accurately described in the prophetic words of Jesus, "I am come not to send peace on earth but a sword," than in the sweet strain of the angelic song, descriptive of the Gospel's future and final influence, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." The disciples of Christ are still "not of the world." The Gospel of Christ in its purity is still too pure for the world's cordial acceptance, and those therefore who advocate it must still expect, if they are true to their honest convictions, to excite hostility, and provoke opposition, in many quarters. How necessary is it, then,—assuredly it is little less so now than it was when the noble-minded Apostle addressed the exhortation to his Ephesian converts,—for every true soldier of Christ to prepare himself for a contest both with errors of practice and errors of opinion, both with the vices and the prejudices of his fellow-men, and with this view to take unto himself the whole armour of God! What is this armour? The Apostle has

given a description of it, than which it would be difficult to conceive one more animated and energetic, or more beautifully appropriate. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God."

And, in the first place, truth is to be the military belt, the cincture of the loins, by the aid of which the garments, that might otherwise impede the free motion of the limbs, are kept high and close around the body, so as to allow the feet to proceed safely and rapidly in their onward course, without stumbling and without delay. Where this girdle is wanting, the loose vesture is sure to cumber, if not trip, the wearer. Nothing is so well calculated as a clear perception, and firm conviction, of the truth and justice of the cause we advocate, to ensure firmness of step, and speed of movement; to give us confidence in ourselves, and impel us forward to communicate to others what we know. "Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth;" —and "having on the breastplate of righteousness." Truth and righteousness, a correct theory and a virtuous practice, must go together. The sound

judgment will avail nothing without the pure and honest heart. "Let this be your wall of brass," says a heathen author, "to have nothing of which to accuse yourself, to grow pale with no fault." "What stronger breastplate," says our great dramatist,—(had he not the words of the Apostle in his view when he thus wrote?)—

> "than a heart untainted?
> Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just,
> And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
> Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."

Of the value of this part of the Christian armour Paul could speak from experience, for he had worn it through many a day of trial, and experienced its protecting power in many a sharp conflict. "Herein had he *exercised* himself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." We may rest assured, my friends, that there is nothing like it: uncorrupted integrity of heart and life, virtuous consistency of conduct, is not merely a breastplate,—it is a whole suit of defensive armour, a panoply, clothed in which a man may go where he will, and fear no foe. "He who is sound of life and pure from crime," says the classic poet, in a passage with which our boyhood was familiar, "stands in no need of Moorish javelin, or bow, or quiver full of poisoned arrows, but may journey, if he will, unharmed over the wildest and most inhospitable regions of the globe." "Who is

he that will harm you," says one on whose authority we set higher value, "if ye be followers of that which is good?" Put on, then, brethren, the breastplate of righteousness. And "have your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." Let your tread be noiseless as it is firm. Modestly, meekly, unobtrusively advance in your onward course. When duty urges you forward bate not an inch of ground; but take your position calmly and quietly; give no unnecessary offence, sound no note of noisy triumph; let not your feet be shod with iron, either to clatter as you pass, or to trample with needless violence on the fallen foe. "In meekness instruct those that oppose themselves." Prove by your conduct even to your bitterest enemies that you have not forgotten that the Gospel which you preach is the Gospel of *peace*.

"Above," or, as it should rather be translated, in addition to, "all these," proceeds the Apostle, "take the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." "It was customary among the ancients," says Dr. Chandler, "to make small firebrands in the form of arrows composed of various combustibles, which they shot among their enemies to disorder and annoy them; these the soldiers used to receive on their shields." The meaning of the apostle seems obvious,—let firm faith in the presiding providence

of God, and in His sure promises by Jesus Christ, serve as a broad impenetrable shield, on which all the burning shafts of malice, the calumnies, and slanders, the threatenings, execrations, and anathemas, by which your enemies will endeavour to wound or terrify you, shall fall harmless, soon to send up from the earth an expiring flame. What are the noisy denunciations of human vengeance, or even the temporary wounds which it has sometimes power to inflict, to him who can repose a well-founded confidence in an approving Saviour, and a protecting and rewarding God? Take, then, the shield of faith.

Take also the helmet of salvation. "Take for a helmet," says the Apostle, in another passage (1 Thess. v. 8), "the *hope* of salvation"; and this doubtless is his meaning here. Let the hope, that is, of eternal life through Jesus Christ be the defence of the Christian warrior's head, the noblest part of his frame, the seat of thought. Cheered and invigorated by this hope, let his mind preserve its equanimity amidst the various trials and temptations of life, not suffering its composure to be unduly disturbed, or its attention distracted from the one thing needful. What are the troubles of earth to him who has his hope in heaven? Wherefore should they excite in him any anxious thought? Why should they disturb his peace? "The hope of salvation," says an able commentator, "built on

the promises of God, will preserve from the fatal effects of temptation, from worldly terrors and evils, so that they shall not disorder the imagination, or pervert the judgment, or cause men to desert the path of duty." Take for a helmet, then, the hope of salvation.

Finally, says the Apostle, "Take the sword of the spirit which is the word of God." No other weapon of offence,—of attack I should rather say, for of offence the Christian would gladly know nothing,—is mentioned: it is, in truth, the only one in the Christian armoury. "Though we walk in the flesh," says St. Paul, in another passage, "we do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." By the aid of the word of God, my brethren, and of this alone, must we work these wonders both on ourselves and on other men. In the book of Nature, and in the book of Revelation, for in both of these God's true and powerful word is written, we must search diligently for authentic declarations of the Divine will. These, once discovered and clearly understood, we must endeavour to impress deeply, first on our own minds, and then on the minds of those

around us. The word of God is the weapon which He himself has furnished, by which alone we can hope to oppose successfully the banded hosts of ignorance, error, and vice. Sound reasoning, scriptural argument, these alone will avail to refute the dogmas of prejudice, to defeat the wiles of sophistry, to disperse the doubts of unbelief. The sword of the flesh has been often tried, but it has done nothing to arrest, on the contrary it has almost always accelerated, the progress of error and vice. Racks, dungeons, chains have been in vain. The sceptic, the heretic, and the sinner have defied them, and gone away confirmed in their scepticism, their heresy, and their sin. Let the sword of the spirit, then, be tried: let us lay firm hold on it ourselves, and rejoice to place it in the hands of those who go forth with us as champions, to defend and promote what they and we believe to be the cause of truth and virtue.

The only mode of conversion which the Gospel recognizes as legitimate is that which operates upon the heart through the understanding,—conversion wrought by conviction. A sound, lasting, practical faith, a faith which will work powerfully and perseveringly by love, and which will support and animate its possessor under all the trials and temptations of life, can only be infused into the mind by evidence clearly stated, and arguments convincingly urged. It is not by an appeal to

men's fears, interests, or even feelings, that they can be made Christians worthy of the name. Christ came, as he himself testified, "to bear witness to the truth." "Why seek ye to kill me?" said he to the Jews, "a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard from God." "The truth as it is in Jesus," is an apostolic appellation for the Gospel, than which it would not have been possible to devise one more honourable or more appropriate. Our Heavenly Father addresses us, by His Son, as reasonable beings. He would have us "judge even of ourselves that which is right." He commands us "to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." That He speaks often to our fears, our hopes, and our feelings cannot be denied; but then it is always through our understandings. He convinces that He may persuade us. If He says, "My children, give me your hearts," it is not till He has shown abundant reason why we should do so. The heart itself He would deem an offering of little worth if it were not voluntarily surrendered and devoted to Him by the reasonable mind. He takes it not by force, as some would represent, but asks us to give it to Him freely, having first proved that to do so is not less our interest than our duty. Yes, my brethren, true Christians must be made such by conviction. Into a *profession* of faith men may be frightened or bribed, but not into *faith itself*. Put up the

sword of steel, then, into its sheath : violence will avail nothing in this warfare. Neither will the "silver spears" in which an ancient monarch trusted be more effectual. Religion may "exalt her mitred front" in courts and parliaments in vain : it is not by doing so that she will ever make true believers. "He never receives the *love* of the truth," it has been well and forcibly observed, "who does not receive and value it for its own sake, whether delivered in the stately aisle of a cathedral, or beneath the lowly rafters of a barn. Like Israel, the Christian will not hesitate to gather this manna in the fields." Truth needs no dower of earthly goods, to recommend her to the wise man's choice. He receives her in her unadorned loveliness as a daughter of Heaven, and would despise himself if all the riches of this world could make any perceptible addition to her beauty or value in his esteem. Give him Truth—portionless Truth—and he will look with an indifferent eye on the richest treasures with which Error ever was invested by worldly Power. Such, my friends, ever has been, and ever will be, the conduct of the truly wise : but the truly wise are not the multitude. Many there are, and for ages to come will be, to whom Error, or even Vice, in a costly garb, will appear more beautiful than Truth or Virtue in a mean one,—whom it will be found difficult, if not impossible, to persuade that any opinion or

practice can be wrong which Wealth and Power condescend to patronize. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" "Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him?" Can that be truth,—can that be virtue,—which courts and palaces, synagogues and sanhedrims disown, and which must seek for shelter, if it can find it even there, beneath the lowly roof of the poor peasant or the despised publican? From the first age of our Church's history such questions have been asked, and they continue to be asked still. The offence of the Cross is not yet removed, nor will it be removed in our day. He who is determined, at whatsoever cost, to say what he thinks true, and to do what he thinks right, will find many to blame, and many to oppose him. As faithful soldiers of the Cross, it will probably be our lot to the last moment of life to uphold our Master's cause through *evil* as well as *good* report; to defend what we deem true and important against the attacks, not merely of honest argument and virtuous effort, but of sinister influence, and prejudiced and passionate hostility. Be it so, my friends,—shall we decline the combat, and turn and flee on that account? God forbid,—rather, laying to our hearts the counsel of the Apostle, let us "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,"—let us take unto ourselves "the whole armour of God, that we may be able to

withstand in the evil days, and having done all, to stand."

Let truth be the cincture of our loins. Jesus Christ came into the world to bear witness to the truth. All great, and good, and useful men love and cherish it as the great appointed instrument of human improvement. How ardently, how stedfastly our deceased friend loved it, let the labours of his life testify,—the sermons that he preached,—the books that he wrote,—the institutions that he originated or fostered,—the youthful minds that he stored with knowledge, and, what is better still, qualified to acquire knowledge for themselves, and not only to acquire it, but also to apply it to its proper use, and thus to transmute it into *wisdom*, which is far better than knowledge. When truth was in view, or when he had it in his power to impart it, when was he ever known to loiter on the road? Have we not often seen him engaged in the pursuit, high-girded, and anxious that nothing should impede his progress?

Let righteousness be our breastplate. Who can say that our friend did not wear it? Who can deny that he was a man of integrity, sound of life and pure from crime, incapable of wilfully infringing the rights of any man,—one against whom his enemies could find no occasion, "except they should find it against him touching the law of his God"? A sacred regard to *duty*, you well know,

influenced him, and compelled him (as it will compel every truly good man, however kind,) to do and say many things, which, had he been under a less stern controul of rectitude, the gentleness and sweetness of his nature would have induced him to withhold or to suppress. You will bear me witness, I think, that he sacrificed many desires to that which ought to be every good man's supreme desire,—*to be found faithful.* Even love itself could not persuade him to forfeit his allegiance to truth. Next to truth, however, is love; or, rather, *that* love alone is pure and genuine with which truth harmonizes. Let the sandals of peace, therefore, underbind our feet. Here likewise our friend's example is not wanting to us. His bitterest foes, if such exist, will scarcely dispute the assertion that he was a man of peace. Amongst those who differed from him most widely were many that he loved, and that loved him. When Unitarians were attacked, an exception was often made for Dr. Carpenter. Wherefore was this? Was it that he was unfaithful to his convictions?—that he shrank, with coward fear, from the manifestation of the truth, as he believed it to be in Jesus? No: you are well aware that it was not so; but that he habitually spoke what he regarded as the truth in love,—with a "religious modesty,"—with an humble sense of his own fallibility,—with a recollection of the evil that arises from "men's feeling," as

ADDRESS AT THE INTERMENT.

Fellow Christians! it is our mournful duty to accompany to the grave the remains of a most respected brother, whom God has been pleased to grant to see many days of life. We mourn not the child called away in the morning of its existence; nor one engaged in the active and busy pursuits of the world, snatched from those employments to which he was yet devotedly and ardently attached: but we mourn, cherishing, at the same time, feelings of Christian resignation, the removal of one who had long discharged his duty in his day and generation; been weaned from the cares and from many of the joys of life; and who knew that, in the course of nature, his continuance here must be short.

We may say, I believe, that, like Timothy, our deceased friend had been acquainted with the Scriptures from his youth. But our friend enjoyed an advantage pertaining not to the youth and inexperience of that amiable disciple; for, like Simeon in the Gospel, his principles of religion and virtue had been cemented by the maturity of age; they had survived the shock of the youthful passions; and, having advanced to the very border of this earthly scene, he could cherish a firm confidence in the promises of Jehovah, and unfeigned gratitude to heaven for the varied blessings bestowed on him in his

his unquestionably pious, and benevolent, gentle, and truly catholic spirit, would gladly have persuaded themselves that he thought more nearly with them, and held loosely, if he really did hold, what they conscientiously regarded as pernicious errors. The good-will which prompted this surmise did honour to their hearts, and exemplified that sympathy which exists, even in *this* world, between the truly good of all sects, to be fully developed, we hope and believe, in another and a better. They were, however, mistaken: though there were doubtless many topics of minor importance on which he, like every truly wise and sober-minded man, did not pretend to have come to any positive and final decision,—on what are generally deemed the leading doctrines of the Unitarian Christian creed his mind had been long made up,—so far, I mean, as this can be said of any man who has resolved never to close his ears against argument, or his mind against conviction, —and did not waver. In his exegetical and controversial writings those who feel interested in the subject will find, I believe, with little exception if any, his maturest and latest thoughts.

Let the hope of salvation, my friends, be our helmet, to guard the seat of thought, to cheer, revive, and strengthen the mind, pressed upon by the cares, anxieties, and responsibilities of life. *That* hope burned brightly, I believe, in our

friend's bosom, during those periods when his mind was in its full health and vigour; but there were seasons, we do not attempt to conceal, of depression, caused, we believe, by bodily and mental exhaustion, when he suffered severely from the thought that he fell so far below his own high standard of excellence, and that he had done so little (alas! what then shall many of us think of our doings?) for the cause of his Saviour and his God. Some of the best of men, I need not tell you, have known such seasons of darkness, and surely it may well be questioned whether to the heart-searching eye of the Omniscient, the severity of self-reproach, and the deep sense of unworthiness, may not sometimes be indications of the truest worth. For the sincerely good always to retain a hopeful frame of mind, and to combine cheerful trust with deep humility, may not be always possible: how far it was, or was not so, in our friend's case, it is for Him only who knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust, to decide; and to His decision, none, if I know any thing of his moral nature, will bow more profoundly, more submissively than he. Yet, let me here suggest, with diffidence (for I know well how far more dangerous and common it is to run into the opposite extreme), that our lamented friend might sometimes have done better and more wisely if he had spared himself, and, by attempting less,

retained longer the strength and spirits to do more. Judging from what we saw, depression with him was never the result of indolence, but often of exhaustion: he tasked his powers too heavily: he literally "spent himself" in his Master's service. Is it for *us* to condemn him for it? Let those only of our number presume to do so who approach within some moderate distance of the mark of virtuous exertion. In that case, will he have many accusers? Alas, how few! Nevertheless, to husband strength and spirits, and when we can, to "go on our way rejoicing," *is* a duty. Let us perform it according to our ability, seeking strength from Him who alone can make it possible and easy to us. "I believe I understand your pensiveness," said the celebrated Cuvier to a friend who was subject to occasional fits of depression; "pray thus to God, 'I will keep thy commands; give me tranquillity in return.' A kind Providence will not refuse so simple a prayer. Keep your mind active and your soul pure, and all will come right." It is beautifully said, and the rule is an excellent one, but, like most human rules, it needs others to explain it. The activity of the mind which it prescribes needs regulation itself, and though to err in deficiency be by far the most common fault, we may err in excess. Our friend, I cannot but think, sometimes erred thus, and hence the failure of hope under the influence of

exhaustion. Hope sometimes failed, but love never. "Even when most melancholy"—it is a filial testimony and a touching one—"he was full of love."

Finally, let our only weapon of attack be the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. How greatly our friend prized that sword,—how carefully he watched over it to keep it bright, and burnished, and ready for use,—how well he wielded it,—we are all witnesses. No carnal weapon in his contests with the enemies of our faith, did he ever prefer to it. For scriptural research and scriptural knowledge his praise is in all our churches. In this also let us emulate our friend. Thus armed, and advancing to the bloodless contest, with prayers for ourselves, for each other, and for all saints, and with earnest desires that we may prevail, so far only as our cause is righteous and we deserve to do so,—we cannot, my brethren, be defeated. In the war of opinions those who contend with an honest spirit for truth only, may win the victory even by their own defeat. In that war, be the combatants who they may, truth is sure to triumph in the end, and all *her* victories those who truly love her will account *their own*. Bereaved and mourning family, honoured colleague, and faithful flock of the deceased,—members of the same household of faith, Christian brethren of differing sentiments, and generous opponents, if such there be amongst

my hearers,—go forth all of you, and let me too go forth with you in the spirit and power of the Lord, to the several stations to which God has appointed us. Let our departed brother's example animate us to be, like him, followers of the one great captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ.—Wherein our brother was faithful and successful, let us emulate him. Wherein he seemed to us to fail in any thing, let us be on our guard, and watch and pray, lest we fail so,—remembering who it was that admonished us in his own hour of trial, that the willingness of the spirit, even when it is most willing, must always have to contend in this world with the weakness of the flesh. Looking unto Jesus, brethren, as our great leader in the spiritual warfare, let us "take unto ourselves the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand."—Amen.

PRAYER.

O Almighty God our Heavenly Father, Thou doest all things wisely and well. By faith we discern the wisdom that we cannot fathom, and the goodness whose operations we cannot understand. Clouds and darkness are sometimes round about Thee, but we know that Thou art behind them;

and we earnestly pray that they may never have power to hide Thee from the view of our souls. We thank Thee, O God, on behalf of our dear brother whom it hath pleased Thee to remove by a secret dispensation from amongst us. We are grateful for all Thy mercies to him, and to us through him, during his continuance with us. Blessed be Thy name for all his virtuous labours, for all his faithful counsels, for all his successful, and all his sincere though unsuccessful, endeavours to act as Thy instrument of good to his brethren of mankind. We implore Thy blessing upon his work of love. May it continue to produce fruit unto life eternal. Though dead may he yet speak to us, and may what he has spoken according to Thy will dwell in our hearts and influence our lives. May we be followers of him, so far as he was a follower of Christ. Merciful God! pour the balm of Christian consolation into the wounds which Thou hast inflicted. Be the husband of the widow, the Father of the fatherless, the Heavenly friend of those whom it hath pleased Thee to deprive of an earthly one. Pour out upon this congregation, its present and successive pastors, the perpetual dew of thy blessing. In this place may the words of truth be always spoken with power, in the spirit of love, and listened to by hearing ears and understanding hearts. Be with thy young servants who are preparing to engage in the ministry of Thy

word,—go with them to the stations of usefulness which Thou shalt choose for them,—and grant that they may employ aright that rich inheritance of faith and love which Thou hast bestowed upon them. Blessed be thy name, O God, though Thou afflictest, Thou dost not leave us comfortless. It is not for us to sorrow as those who have no hope. Jesus hath died and risen from the dead. Thanks be unto Thee, who givest us the victory through him.—Amen.

PHILP AND EVANS, PRINTERS, CLARE-STREET, BRISTOL.

From the Author

THE CHRISTIAN KEPT IN PERFECT PEACE.

A SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE

REV. T. MORELL,

LATE DIVINITY TUTOR OF COWARD COLLEGE, LONDON;

AND PREACHED IN THE

WEIGH-HOUSE CHAPEL,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 8TH, 1840.

BY

T. BINNEY.

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PREFACE.

The author feels bound to apologize for dedicating so slight a fabric as this to the memory of so excellent a person as the late Tutor of Coward College. He could not decline the request of the family to preach on the occasion; but his circumstances were such as to preclude his giving to the composition of the Sermon that time and care which, it seems to him, *should* be devoted to what is really *intended* for the press. The idea of publication, therefore, was never entertained; and though this, afterwards, was strongly urged upon him, it was positively declined, from the impossibility of the piece being made what the Subject and the Occasion required, without being so entirely changed as to cease to be what was delivered and heard. It was, at length, however, agreed to print it for *private circulation only*, and, of course, in that case, exactly as it was. For this purpose it was given to the printer; but it being felt, that many who knew and respected the deceased, and who would read with interest, *for his sake*, any thing occasioned by

his recent removal, might not have an opportunity of procuring it as a gift, the Sermon is permitted to be published for sale. As it is, therefore,—destitute of all that should distinguish a printed book, and retaining the familiar expressions which can only be employed when speaking to one's own flock and family—as it is, it is here sent forth, and respectfully

Inscribed

TO THE BEREAVED WIDOW,

AND THE

NUMEROUS FRIENDS AND CONNECTIONS

OF THE LATE

REV. T. MORELL.

SERMON.

ISAIAH XXVI. 3.

THOU WILT KEEP HIM IN PERFECT PEACE WHOSE MIND IS STAYED UPON THEE; BECAUSE HE TRUSTETH IN THEE.

I HAVE selected this passage as the subject of our present meditation, because I intend, this morning, to make a brief reference to the removal, by death, of a well known and greatly beloved minister of Christ, to whose character and experience I think it appropriate. I gave no intimation of this purpose last Lord's day. It is not my custom to give such intimations. I have an extreme repugnance to whatever tends to bring people together, in a Christian church, from motives of curiosity rather than from sentiments of devotion; in addition to which, I cannot overcome an almost morbid aversion to funeral discourses, *as a class*, however strongly I am convinced that there are occasions (and the present is one of them) when the omission of such a tribute of respect might be an injury both to the living and the dead; the one being deprived of the stimulus furnished by Christian examples of active faith or enduring patience: and the other of the testimony which it becomes survivors to bear to their virtues. "The memory of the just is blessed." "The

righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." It is the mark of a corrupt and degenerate age when *such* perish, and no one is found to lay it to heart.

The custom of omitting to give public intimation of a funeral discourse, has, I confess, one great disadvantage; it prevents the mass of the people from assembling together in a state of mind prepared to sympathise with the object of the service. They are taken by surprize. They were not aware that the preacher was to aim at any thing unusual;—and without some *early*, distinct intimation, they are unable to perceive the drift and bearing of his remarks. The consciousness of this has induced me this morning to state, at the outset, the duty I have undertaken, and to assign my reasons for the selection of the passage before us.

In relation to the passage, it is not my purpose to examine critically its exact import—to notice the context —the beautiful ode of which it is a part—or the different renderings of which some clauses in it are susceptible. Just as it stands, it expresses, in my opinion, a great truth,—a truth, in the enjoyment of which, our departed friend lived and died; one, therefore, which may appropriately furnish us with subjects at once of instruction and consolation, now that "devout men have carried him to his burial," and we are assembled to pay a public tribute of respect to his memory, and to drop a parting tear upon his ashes.

I propose,

I. To illustrate the text by a few general consecutive observations; and,

II. To apply the subject to the present occasion.

I. We are to illustrate the text by a few general consecutive observations; of which, the

1st may be—That the state or condition of human existence is such, that men may be destitute of "peace," or have their tranquillity greatly disturbed.

The text is based upon this fact. Peace, whatever it may be, or whatever it may include, is something which is here made the subject of a divine promise; it is something to be conferred and secured by God; and the enjoyment of it constitutes a distinction between him who has it, and others,—others, who, by supposition, have it *not*. "*He*"—the man spoken of—the man described and distinguished by a certain character—"*he* shall be kept in perfect peace;" a mode of expression, implying that there are many who have no peace, or who have it imperfectly. We can conceive that the world might have existed without this being the case. Indeed, so natural does it seem for God to create only a beautiful and perfect world, and to preside over nothing but an innocent and happy family, that a Paradaisaical state of the earth and man, is what our thoughts and reasonings are perpetually demanding, and the simple existence of evil *at all*—any where, and in any degree—has ever been felt as an insuperable difficulty. Instead of being "born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," we can imagine that man might have been born to "peace," and have entered upon it, in all senses as his natural inheritance. We believe that there is a world in which *exceptions* to a condition of perfect enjoyment never occur; in which some retain it as a blessing which they never lost, and some as that to which they have been redeemed; but *all* have it; "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" fills and dilates every bosom, and renders it impossible for *this* circumstance to con-

stitute a distinction between one of the inhabitants of heaven and another.

This, however, is not the case *here*. Man is exposed to many inroads on his peace and composure. The mind may be ruffled, agitated, distressed, by many circumstances, and sometimes to an extent perfectly terrible. The following sources of disturbance may be appropriately specified in a religious discourse.

In the first place,—the peace of the soul may be broken and lost through an awakened conscience. "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity, but a *wounded spirit* who can bear?" When the arrow has entered into the soul, and the very essence, so to speak, of the man's *nature* is maimed and crushed, every thing like repose or tranquillity is gone. A man conscious of sin—burdened by guilt —convinced of his immortality—believing in the Bible—in the God of it, and the hell of it—and dwelling perpetually upon such thoughts as are suggested by the fact and the magnitude of his transgressions—such a man has heaped upon his heart the fuel and the fire, which may light up within him the intensest flame. So dreadful in some cases have been the visible and vocal indication of these horrors, that attendants and friends have been afraid to witness them, and the individual has become a burden to others, a terror to himself. Such cases, it is true, are extreme, and are generally the consequence of a long course of vice or blasphemy, or the commission of some great and enormous crime; but, "*all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God;"—"By works of the law, *no* flesh living can be justified;—"*Every* mouth must be stopped, for all the world is guilty before God:"—hence it is, that the most moral and upright of men, when they come to understand the spirituality and nature of the

divine law, and the utter insufficiency of mere secular virtue to meet its demands, find themselves to be *sinners* in the plain, common-sense meaning of the term—exposed, in consequence, to future condemnation, and liable, therefore, *now*, to the agonies and throes of a "wounded spirit."

In the second place. Even supposing an individual to have passed through the process to which we have referred, and to have acquired something like hope towards God, there are yet other modes by which the peace of his mind may be assaulted. These, whatever they may be, are all comprehended within the great system, under which we live, constituting *the Providence of God*, particular and general. The Scripture reveals, and the experience of the holiest of men illustrates, an internal conflict to which Christians are here exposed;—"the fight of faith"—"oppositions between the flesh and the spirit"—"wrestlings, not only with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickednesses in high places." Outward circumstances, immediately touching the individual himself, may become the source of infelicity and disquiet. Property and possessions may be swept away. Health may decline—he may be made to possess "months of vanity"—"wearisome nights may be appointed to him."—Or death may invade the domestic circle,—the wife or the husband may have to be resigned, —or "the *only son*"—the "Isaac, who is beloved"—may be demanded back again.—Or friends may change, may desert, or annoy—their "faces not being towards him as heretofore." Such things, and a thousand others, in the immediate circle in which a man moves, may come upon him to disturb his peace. Supposing, however, that this should not be the case, there are other things by which he may be harrassed. God's judgments may be

abroad in the earth—famine, pestilence, war, with their attendant evils, may be crowding at his side. Or, if not, he may live in times of agitation and error—the church of God may seem to be again in the wilderness or in captivity; men's minds may be running to extremes,—every thing on which the hopes of humanity rest, may seem to be disturbed;—the fruits of love, and the institutions of religion, may appear likely to perish, by the hand of violence or the conflagrations of controversy. These things, and such as these, "fret" the mind of a good man, or *may* do it. The devout and pious of former ages felt and deplored them:—"Wilt thou cast off for ever? Wilt thou be favourable no more?" "How long, oh Lord, how long!" Such was the voice of the church herself. We can easily conceive that there may be a world from which all these things "shall have passed away," but the text tells us that the world we inhabit is not that, for it takes for granted that men here may be distinguished from each other by the very circumstance of having peace or of having it *not*.

2nd. Our second general observation is, that man must obtain peace through the medium of just views of God and his ways.

The grand source, both of agony and rapture, in all worlds, is the idea of God. According to the moral state of the creature, this idea will suggest to it images of felicity or terror. If there was no God, or we believed in none, or never thought of him, conscience would be nothing—nor sin—nor death—nor hell. It is the thought of God—of God's character, government, and law—that makes sin what it is, arms it with its sting, and enables it to goad

and exasperate the conscience. The history of man, in all ages, shews that he has been liable to feelings like these, Every where his religion has been founded *in fear;* —it has had to adapt itself to his case as a sinner; to sooth apprehension and excite hope,—and hence, every where, it has professed, by sacrifice, to set forth a propitiation, and to reconcile to each other God and man. Men want peace, peace of conscience, peace springing from the pardon of sin; and they feel that to obtain this, they must obtain a hope of the Divine Mercy. They must get such views of God as to be able to "trust" in Him.

Erroneous views of God may produce indifference, or prolong terror: they may infuse a false peace, or occasion continued despair. Dangers beset us on both sides. God may be conceived of as too easy towards sin, or too inexorable towards the sinner. His *mercy* may be conceived of as never withheld, or as seldom exercised. In either case, evil results. Truth and peace are between the extremes.

To reveal the truth, and to impart peace, are the great objects of the Gospel Dispensation. Instead of extenuating human sinfulness, it proceeds and is *founded upon* that fact: it gives the most glorious demonstration of God's love, as a *personal* attribute, while it distinctly intimates the *official* difficulties that interfered with its expression: these, however, are declared to be met, and what is personal and official in Diety harmonized, by "the Word being made flesh, and dwelling amongst us;" by "Him, who knew no sin, being made a sin offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;" by "God sending his son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and *for sin,*" and "setting him forth, as a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he might be just, and

the justifier of him that believeth." The priesthood and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, instead of being the means of exciting towards us the Divine love, are themselves the result and expression of it; but they constitute the *legal and public reason* on the ground of which, one who, like God, governs by law, and not merely by feeling or caprice, may, legally and justly, as a public act, and not merely as a private and personal one, bestow mercy, and give pardon and peace to every penitent sinner that pleads it. However imperfectly this may have been understood under former dispensations, we know it, in its fulness and clearness, by the revelations of the Gospel; for in this way, He, "who at the first caused the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" that glory, the glory of being a "just God, and yet a Saviour," is only seen when we properly "behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," "*who is our peace*, and who hath broken down the middle wall of partition," not only between Jew and Gentile, but between the sinner and God; "in whom the veil is taken away;" 'through whom we have access, by faith, and liberty of speech in pleading with God," and "for whose sake," all manner of sin can be blotted out, and the penitent believer accepted and justified.

Views of God, such as are involved in these scriptural facts and declarations, are necessary to the enjoyment of peace by a mind under the conviction of sin. These views, operating on the heart, and leading to the exercise of repentance, produce that state of mind which we term *faith* or *trust*, which unites the soul to Christ, and which, "being imputed to it for righteousness," gives

it "*peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ." This, the scripture assures us, is attended and followed with those influences of the Holy Spirit, which renew and sanctify; and which thus, by changing the tastes and habits of the heart, prepare it for the enjoyment of *that peace* which springs from the possession of a holy character, and the cultivation of a conscience "void of offence towards God and man," The knowledge of the fact and of the mode of mercy, and of the way by which, in a world like ours, guilty and corrupt creatures can be both reconciled to, and made like, God—*this* is the medium through which the peace we need must be secured.

It is not necessary to dwell at all upon the other topic —the influence of right views of God in preserving peace under the trials of providence, particular or general. It is very obvious that this must be the case. If calamity and affliction are looked at apart from God altogether, and as the mere working out of a great machine—the results of a blind, unintelligent necessity—a thing without thought, feeling, or purpose,—such a notion seems to rouse and exasperate, instead of producing submission or repose. Or if they are viewed merely as expressions of Divine displeasure—as flashes of wrath, or strokes of power, and nothing else,—this will be productive of anything but peace. All, however, is changed when the Christian can refer all to God—to one who thinks, and plans, and loves—who has personal attributes, properties, and affections—and who suffers evil and affliction to befall us, not merely to shew his power, but to evince his paternity—to purify the heart, and improve the character—to produce "the peaceable fruits of righteousness" —and even (for such is the magnificent statement of scripture) to make those who are exercised by trouble "the *partakers* of his holiness." "Our light afflictions,

which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory." "The cup that *my father* giveth me, shall I not drink it?"

The same thought is applicable to the agitations of the world and the church. The heart of the Christian may sometimes "tremble for the ark of God." The state of the nations may produce fears of coming change; but the secret of peace is "trust" in God as presiding over all. Whatever occurs, or whatever may come, "the heavens do rule." "There is a God that judgeth in the earth"—"Jehovah reigneth, therefore—*rejoice*." "*He* it is that putteth down one and setteth up another"—"that stilleth the noise of the waves, and the tumult of the people." "He is our refuge and strength; we will not fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." As to God's church and truth, however antichrist or error may appear at times to make their advances, "the foundation of God standeth sure,"—the promises of Christ can never be defeated; "on this rock I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In his general providence indeed, God is not working out either the salvation or the sanctity of nations as such, but He *is* presiding over all their movements, and will take care of his truth, his church, and his glory; and in these views, the devout man finds a rest and a home for his anxious spirit, in the most agitated and "troublous times."

3rd. Our third observation is, that peace will be permanent, or unbroken, in proportion as the mind is "*stayed*" on those views from which it springs.

Not only will erroneous views of God and of Providence prevent peace, or produce a false and baseless tranquility, but much evil and unhappiness may be experienced by the mind not *staying* itself on those that are true. If the Christian habitually live, without realizing the truths of the Gospel, and the aspects they afford of the Divine character, as actual facts; if, without for a moment either doubting or denying them, he yet does not advert to them as great realities; if, at "any time, he lets them slip," and thus, by forgetfulness, they become to him as if they *were not;* of course, he cannot possess the advantages and blessings which flow from them. In the same way, if doubts or insinuations get into the mind respecting the nature or importance of the Gospel; if faith in it be intermitted and broken; if the heart is neither "established by grace," nor the mind possessed of the "assurance of understanding," peace cannot be habitually enjoyed;—nothing within us will be stable or fixed;—the feelings will fluctuate as the thoughts tremble between certainty and suspicion; and the human soul, instead of being like the calm lake, reflecting the pure heaven from its surface, will rather resemble "the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt,"—or at least a *wave* of it, "*a wave driven with the wind and tossed.*" If, however, the mind of the Christian is *stayed* upon God—*stayed,* in the two senses of being *confident* of the views of Him warranted by the Gospel, and of habitually and practically *realizing* these, then, *peace* may be expected as a permanent blessing, or, at least, much is done to secure it. Such a man never thinks of sin, without thinking of the Saviour and the sacrifice,—the fountain once "opened for uncleanness," and still full and flowing for the unclean! He never thinks of the evil that is in him, without thinking of the sanctifying Spirit and his power to

expel it. He never thinks of his daily imperfections without thinking of the "righteous advocate;" nor of the dangers by which he is beset—his own weakness, and the strength and confederacy of the "evil world," "the flesh," and "the devil"—he never thinks of these things, without recurring, at the same time, to the immutable promise of the Lord Jesus,—"my grace is sufficient for thee, my power is perfected in weakness." This is what is meant by having the mind *stayed* on these things. God has revealed great truths; he has given "great and precious promises;" the man treats the truths *as facts;*—he confides in the promises, believing that God *means* what they say: his mind rests there; it is firm and fixed in this happy persuasion; and by this constant *staying* of itself on the rock of ages, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," fills the heart, and becomes within him "as a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The principle involved in these observations is easily applicable to the other topics already touched. The man whose mind is thus "stayed" upon God, habitually looks at every occurrence as connected with Him. "Promotion cometh not from the east or from the west," but from God. "*He* giveth power to get wealth." Adversity and death are equally his servants:—nay, the government of the world is *medatorial;* the Redeemer of men "has all power in heaven and in earth;" all events and things do him homage; nothing can happen without his permission, and every thing is sent by Him with some message and for some end He who habitually feels this, and welcomes, on account of it, pain or joy, birth or bereavement, prosperity or sorrow, he, without sinking into a stoic or a stone, without losing the attributes of manhood, or becoming insensible to outward changes, is certainly in possession of a principle, the tendency of which is, at all

times, and under all circumstances, to make him "possess his soul in peace," and to keep him from being "swallowed up with over much sorrow."

4th. The fourth observation is, that this happy state is to be regarded as the result of the combined and harmonious operation of Divine influence and human agency. *Thou* wilt keep him in perfect peace, because *he trusteth* in thee.

A Christian man "trusts" God—that is *his* act. He is divinely "kept"—that is *God's*. To trust, is an exercise of the human mind, and no other mind, not even God's, can do it for us. Our being kept, is an exercise of divine power, and could not be secured unless Omnipotence "held us up." These two things are distinct, but they are neither contradictory nor irreconcileable. It may not be easy, indeed, to say where the one begins and the other ends; nor is it necessary to be able to do so, in order to act in harmony with both. Christians are "kept," as the apostle Peter expresses it, "by the power of God, through faith." Each part of the process is necessary—the faith of the believer not less than the energy of God. Either by itself would be insufficient, or rather could not act; for the power of God, in preserving his people, is not the exercise of mechanical force, but of holy influence, operating upon *mind* in a manner accordant with its nature and properties, and producing its effect, as much through the voluntary actions of free agents as the gracious operations of divine love. Exclusively to contemplate the one part or the other of this complex process is to fall into error. Men have done so on both sides, and from the best of motives. One class have wished, and very properly, to secure to God the entire glory of man's sal-

vation; but they have seemed to think that there was no way of doing so, but by maintaining principles, which, fairly carried out, make God the sole and exclusive agent in the universe; destroy entirely all moral government; and make divine power, as it operates on mind, to act in precisely the same way as it does when it moves the earth and the planets. Others, again, fleeing from this extreme—asking, and very properly asking, "how, then, can God judge the world?"—anxious to secure both human agency and human responsibility, have been led to views upon these matters which would set aside the necessity for divine grace altogether. I believe we must hold *both* truths; and I am quite sure that whatever speculative difficulties encumber them, none, of any importance in practice, will ever be felt by a devout man: he will look to God, knowing that God alone can keep him: he will believe and watch, knowing that by vigilance and by faith he stands.

These principles are in the passage before us. "*Thou* wilt keep him in perfect peace, *because he trusteth in thee.*" The man, knowing the truth about God, in those aspects in which he needs it, takes it as truth, and trusts God with all that concerns him. He trusts him with his *soul*, on the ground of the promise which is connected with the great propitiatory sacrifice;—he trusts him with his *concerns*, believing that all things will be made "to work together for good;"—he trusts him, too, with *his own cause and his own world*, perfectly satisfied that he is competent to take care of both; and that though sometimes, in the present history of each, "clouds and darkness are round about him," it will be seen at last, in their ultimate issues, that he "hath done all things" wisely and "well," and that "justice and truth are the habitations of his throne."

While the man is thus trusting God, God is "keeping

him in perfect peace," and that through the exercise of this very principle. The faith described has the direct effect, by way simply of natural consequence, to preserve the mind in uniform composure. It is exercised by man, but it is also a grace and gift of the spirit: — divine influence originates at first and continues to sustain it. The man is "kept" by daily supplies of this influence, but for those supplies, he offers, daily, earnest supplication. God keeps him, by inclining him to the exercise of all those habits of practical obedience, of humble devotion, conscientiousness, spirituality, vigilance, caution, by which he "grows up into Christ in all things;"—advances from a babe to a young man, and from a young man to an elder and a father;—"forgets the things that are behind, and stretches forth to those that are before," and thus becomes fixed and established, having made his "calling and election sure." God keeps him, by "strengthening him with might in the inner man;" enabling him to use the divine armour—to "quit himself" *like* a man—to resist the force and to quench the fiery darts of the Wicked. God keeps him, by the exercise of special paternal care, because he honours him by his filial trust. "He gives his angels charge concerning him, to keep him in all his ways." "The angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him, and delivereth them." *Fear not, I am with thee,"* is the language of God to his confiding child. "Though I walk through the valley of *the shadow of death, I will not fear, because thou art with me,"* is that child's appropriate reply; "thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I desire besides thee; thou shalt guide me with thy council, and afterwards receive me to glory."

I have thus endeavoured to bring out, by a few general

consecutive observations, the ideas which are involved in this passage, and the entire truth they combine to express. It only remains that I should briefly advert to the character of our friend, whose removal has occasioend the present discourse.

II. The Rev. Thomas Morell was born at Maldon, in Essex, and was, at his death, in his fifty-ninth year. His parents were descendants of French Protestants, who fled from their country in times of persecution. More than one of his remote ancestors, he had reason to believe, were distinguished as ministers—some certainly were so for their faith and heroism. Mr. Morell received the rudiments of classical learning from his two elder brothers, who were both at the time preparing for the ministry. He became a student in Homerton college, and came out, at or about the age of twenty, a respectable scholar, and well furnished in other respects for the sacred office. He was first settled over a church at St. Neot's, Huntingdonshire, where he remained twenty years, and spent a most useful portion of his life. In 1821 he became the divinity tutor of Wymondley Academy, having, if I am not mistaken, been invited to the same office three years before, though he then declined it. That academy, a few years ago, was removed to London, and became connected with the London University, under the title of Coward College, from the name of the person by whom it was originally founded and endowed. Here our friend continued till his death, which took place, rather unexpectedly, on the morning of Tuesday week, the 25th of last month.

I am not preaching in the chapel of the college, nor by the request of the trustees of the institution referred to;

I not only feel, therefore, that I am not called upon to refer minutely to our departed friend's academic life, but that there would be something like an impropriety in doing so ;—indeed, this is not the place, nor is this the time, in which to advert to such a subject. It was not in this character that *you* knew him, but as a man of God, a minister of Christ, who often occupied this pulpit, and spoke to you the words of eternal life in his own affectionate and touching manner. I have to refer to points of more importance than any thing which officially distinguished the deceased. Having, however, been in the college when our friend came to it, and knowing, as well as any one, its exact state at that time, I cannot forbear saying, as I pass on, that I regard his accession to the office he filled as having been of great and permanent advantage to it. Many of his students are now occupying posts of importance and usefulness, and will, with those who are at present in the college, regard his memory with affectionate respect.

Our departed friend was pious from a child. He was one of those of whom it may be said, "they never need to be converted." I do not mean that he did not need to be *renewed* and *sanctified* by the divine spirit; but that the imperceptible influences of that spirit, so early and efficiently descended upon his soul, as to mould it from the first to habits of holiness—to impress it in childhood with God's image—and thus to keep him from those sins from which so many require to be *turned*, and have to learn to lament with bitterness and tears. He was kept innocent,—innocent even of the *knowledge* of much, which perhaps may be known without sin, but certainly not without danger. He advanced to the ministry with ardent zeal—from voluntary choice—with decided piety—and with enlightened attachment to the great principles of evangelical religion.

When Mr. Morell first entered upon the work of the ministry he had a slight hesitation in his mode of utterance, which by care he almost effectually overcame, so that it never interfered with the effect of his addresses, and, indeed, sometimes even added to that effect. His sermons were always distinguished by great seriousness—richness of evangelical truth—touching appeals—and very often by beautiful thoughts clothed in chaste and elegant language. In his first charge he was exemplary as a Pastor; — was attractive to, and interested in, young persons;—and was blessed of God to the conversion and establishment of many souls. In addition to the usual engagements connected with his church, he was in the habit of preaching in several villages, and thus extended at once, his labours and his usefulness. While doing this, he was not inattentive to personal improvement. He both studied much on subjects immediately connected with his work, and composed and published several volumes containing an outline of general history. His occasional services, in the pulpits of his brethren, during his late residence in the metropolis, were always acceptable to the judicious and the devout: and the charges which he delivered at the ordination of his students, were equally distinguished by the weight of their councils, the solemnity of their tone, the faithfulness of their appeals, and the affection of their spirit.

The piety of our friend was of a high order. He was "a devout man;" but he had nothing of sourness or severity about him. His disposition was bland and cheerful; there was a loveliness and sweetness about his mind and character that endeared him to all that were in the habit of approaching him. More than any man I ever knew he exemplified the character, and enjoyed the blessedness, of which the text we have been considering speaks.

"His soul was kept in perfect peace, being *stayed* upon God—for *he trusted in him.*" His religion was not a thing of times and days—of alternate fits of ardour and coldness, of ecstacy and depression; it was constant and uniform,—a pure, living, lambent light—always fed—never obscured,—like that of the morning, and the path of the just, "shining more and more unto the perfect day." The secret of his calm and happy composure, was his habitual exercise of Christian faith. I do not deny that he was blessed naturally with a peculiar felicity of constitution and temperament; but this, of itself, was far from being the sole cause of the "perfect peace" which he habitually enjoyed. It arose partly from the firm and unhesitating manner in which he received the verities of the Gospel,—partly from his constantly realizing his own interest in the blessings they secured,—and partly from his viewing every thing in connexion with God, and from the exercise of a truly *childlike trust* in his wisdom and goodness. I have been with him under various circumstances—amid some calculated to ruffle and annoy—in the midst of anxiety—in the death-chamber, and at the early grave, of an only son; I have seen him on his own bed in extreme weakness, pain, and danger; *I always found him the same man.* Whatever was passing over the surface of his feelings, there was "perfect peace" settled in his soul. He took the promises of God as an angel would take them, or as a little child listens to the words spoken by its parent; he did not know what it was to doubt, or why Christians should be troubled in mind, since God had spoken, and spoken as he has!

I ought to have mentioned that Mr. Morell was, from early life, much interested in the conversion of the heathen, in which, we may remark, he only resembled the excellent and amiable Dr. Doddridge, to whose divi-

nity chair he succeeded,—for that eminent and benevolent man, a century ago—long before modern missions were thought of—projected a periodical meeting of ministers for the express purpose of engaging in prayer for the extension of the Gospel throughout the world. I am not, I think, mistaken in stating, that our friend was, from his known interest in the subject, applied to to undertake the visit to the missionaries, which was ultimately performed by the late Mr. Tyreman, in connection with Mr. Bennett, the surviving member of that deputation.

Mr. Morell, though of peculiarly amiable and lovely a spirit, was never led by this to the least compromise of important principles. Not only was he decided in his adherence to all evangelical truth, but he was firm and forward in his attachment and advocacy of those views of the kingdom of Christ, of church government, of religious liberty, and of the sin and danger of political interference with spiritual things, which distinguish the body to which he belonged. He had decided sentiments on these matters; he believed them to be both true and important; and he was prepared to advocate and to urge their diffusion, confident that the result could not but in the end produce good, whatever misrepresentation they might encounter now.

About twelve months since, our friend was attacked and prostrated by disease—he was seriously ill; and though he revived somewhat during the summer, his strength and health never returned. His friends, however, hoped, and he hoped himself, that his life might be lengthened for some time, and that he might still survive for further usefulness. But that God "in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways," had otherwise determined. A few weeks ago he became worse, and after some days of increased suffering "fell asleep." I

had not the privilege of visiting him in his illness, for I was out preaching for the Colonial Missionary Society, and I knew nothing of his relapse or danger till I arrived in town, and, while accidentally passing his residence on my way home, observed the indications of mourning and death, and found, at once to my surprise and sorrow, that he was removed from us. I have been favoured, however, with a brief account of the last day or two which he spent on earth, and from this I shall extract two or three characteristic passages.

"A perfectly calm resignation to the divine will was the principal feature in our dear friend's mind, during the twelve months of severe illness which preceded his dissolution. On one occasion, he observed, 'I have looked again and again from this sick bed into my prospects for eternity, and the ground of my hope towards God, and I desire to be thankful, after such a review, that I have a firm and unshaken confidence in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ. I am filled, if not with a joyful hope, yet with a peaceful serenity of mind, so that I do not recollect at any period of this long illness to have felt a moment's solicitude as to its issue, whether it terminate in life or death; such has been the mercy of God to an unworthy sinner, and an unprofitable servant.'

During the evening of Saturday he referred, with much feeling, to a hymn on which he had often dwelt before (547, Congregational Hymn Book), repeating several of the verses; after it was read, he said, 'I cannot think how any Christian can doubt the love of Christ, it is so clear, so certain.'"

He frequently remarked, too, 'on looking back on life, I consider this year as the happiest I have ever passed.'

On the sabbath morning previous to his death, he looked with much delight on the unclouded bright sky,

saying, 'What a glorious sabbath morning,' and then repeated a line of one of Doddridge's hymns, "Shew the bright world, and shew it mine." In the course of the day, he made the following and similar remarks:—"should this be the taking down of this clayey tabernacle, it has been a most merciful dispensation; 'there is a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'" "A cloud has never passed over my mind; Satan has never been permitted to harras me." "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." To his now mourning widow, he once said, on seeing her much cast down—"to you I must propose the test which our Saviour put to his disciples, 'if ye loved me, you would rejoice because I go to the Father.'" On Monday morning, the last day of his life, he appeared much revived, and heard the fourteenth chapter of John with great interest, remarking particularly the nineteenth verse, "because I live, ye shall live also," saying, "*that* is sufficient, we need no other promise." He went down stairs during that day, and no symptom indicated a change till towards the close of it: he did not retire, however, till late, but appearances soon shewed that death was approaching. He remained perfectly sensible. To the oft repeated enquiry whether he felt pain, he replied, "only oppression."—"Fear not, I am with thee," was suggested to him; a faint smile lighted up his countenance, indicating at once, his possession of his faculties, and his enjoyment of the promise. "It is not a dark valley to you?" "Oh no." "Your mind is calm?" "NOT A RUFFLE," was his characteristic reply.—*Not a ruffle!*—and with these, his last words, "kept, by the power of God, through faith," "*in perfect peace*," he "fell asleep," and "entered into his joy." "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

By the same Author.

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DISSENT NOT SCHISM.—A DISCOURSE, delivered at the Monthly Meeting of London Ministers. 8vo. Price 2s.

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TO

THE RECTOR AND PARISHIONERS OF TOOTING,

THIS SERMON

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

By the same Author,

SCRIPTURAL VIEWS CONCERNING THE GREAT AND IMPORTANT DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT; the Substance of a Discourse delivered on Sunday, December 13th, 1835, at the Unitarian Chapel, Ipswich, by JOSEPH KETLEY, the late Pastor, in consequence of his change of sentiment on the subject. Third Edition.

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PREFACE.

The following Sermon was in substance delivered without any expectation that it would be published. Not having sufficient leisure to compose a discourse more suited to the occasion, the writer was under the necessity of revising one that had been preached, a few months previous, to the same congregation. He has since enlarged slightly upon one or two topics at which he had too briefly glanced; and he has availed himself of the suggestion of a friend, upon whose judgment he places full reliance, in being more explanatory than he had been towards the close of his sermon, in the brief allusion which he thought it right to make from the pulpit, concerning his former position. The allusion was to his having been formerly educated for, and for some years engaged in, the Unitarian ministry; and also, to his having been, by Divine grace, led first to see, and then immediately to renounce, those dangerous, because most sophistical errors, which he had himself imbibed when a young man, and to the propagation of which he had zealously, and with more than usual success, devoted himself.

Had time permitted, he would have entered fully into the process through which his own mind had passed in reference to the leading doctrines of the Gospel, and the scriptural evidence by which they appeared to him to be firmly supported; and also have stated his reasons for conforming to the Church established in this country. The time and the occasion would not, in his judgment, have been unsuitable for such a purpose, after the long interval of silence which he has maintained upon these points; but the short period that was left him for a removal, when he undertook his present curacy, and the accumulation of business which consequently devolved upon him, rendered the adequate discharge of such a duty impossible. He has, however, as the reader will see, referred to the previous causes of delay as it regards that part of his duty; and has stated the reasons that have prevailed with him in not having as yet appeared before the public,

in defence of his present views and position. He still hopes, if spared, that he may at no distant period be able, with the Divine blessing, to do what both himself and others deem necessary to be done in his peculiar circumstances;—to attempt, at least, the rescue from pernicious error, of all those whom he may have been instrumental in leading into it, by an appeal to the "Law and to the Testimony" of Him who, while jealous of his own glory, in the matter of worship, has commanded Angels to worship his own and only-begotten Son, and "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." *

In the mean time, he hopes to give such testimony as God by his grace shall enable him, to the great and fundamental truths of Revelation; such as the Deity and Atonement of Christ; the Personality of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of His agency in the conversion of sinners to God; man's fall and impotency, without preventing grace; justification by faith; and the necessity of "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

On other points he apprehends Christians may differ without affecting the vital doctrines of the Gospel; but upon these he apprehends there should be *substantial* agreement, so long as the Scriptures are acknowledged to be the *sole* rule of faith.

The writer in conclusion would remark, that he is deeply sensible of the importance of acknowledging the truth of man's responsibility for his belief; and would respectfully yet earnestly call the attention of Unitarians to a course of lectures, recently preached before the University of Cambridge, by one who fairly grapples with the difficulties of the subject; and who so explains and applies the truth, as to bring home conviction to those upon whom vigorous and manly thought is likely to produce a right effect.†

* Heb. i. 6; John v. 23.

† See Hulsean Lectures for the year 1839; "Man's Responsibility in reference to his Religious Belief, explained and applied. By the Rev. Theyre Smith, M.A., of Queen's College, Cambridge, and Assistant Preacher at the Temple Church."

A SERMON.

LAMENTATIONS III. 40.

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.

THE duty of self-scrutiny is proper at all times; but especially so on the last sabbath of the year. Not only the duty itself, but the spirit in which it should be performed, and the strength in which it should be attempted, are topics of permanent interest to every sincere Christian. While, therefore, these topics are presented to your notice, after such preparation as, under ordinary circumstances, could be given to them, and in humble dependence upon the God of all grace; may you, brethren, attend to them in a right frame of mind, and with prayer for the promised assistance to all who seek it.

Consider, first, to whom and under what circumstances these words of exhortation were addressed.

The words which form the basis of our present meditation were addressed to God's covenant people, who were then in a depressed state on account of their sins. Judah as well as Israel had, at

that time, learned by painful experience, that it was a fearful thing to incur the Divine displeasure. A long and grievous captivity was the punishment which God inflicted upon them, for their shameful departure from him. Ever mindful of his covenant, which He made with Abraham, and renewed with Isaac and Jacob, yet He was as true to his threatenings as to his promises. He had repeatedly declared, that if they were disobedient and rebelled against him, and bowed the knee to idols, he would "visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes." Under that rod were they now smarting; and because the stripes were laid on them by a Father's hand, they were loudly called upon to consider their ways, and to turn again to the Lord.

Israel first, and then Judah, had sinned against Jehovah, by the most shameful idolatry. Jeroboam seduced Israel into the worship of the golden calves; and Manasseh caused Judah to commit, if possible, still greater abomination, by causing them to bow the knee to the idols of the heathen with which he had polluted the temple of the Lord. Thus all the chosen race were drawn into the most heinous sin, and incurred the sore displeasure of Him who, as it regarded the object of worship, had declared himself to be a jealous God. And it is worthy of marked attention, that in the order of time, in which Israel and Judah had respectively sinned, were they visited with the threatened punishment.

Now it was while they were suffering the punishment of captivity for their sins, that the prophet

Jeremiah broke forth in a voice of deep-toned lamentation for their fallen, degraded state; and at the same time that he vindicates the dealings of God with his people, he calls upon them to consider the justice of their doom; and to turn to the hand that smote them with true penitence, as the only method of appeasing His anger and of obtaining a release from their captivity. "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the Most High, proceedeth not evil and good. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." Such, brethren, was the state of those exhorted.

Consider, secondly, what lesson is conveyed by these hortatory words to those who, while they possess the greatest religious privileges, either undervalue, or act at variance with them.

As there is a striking analogy in God's dealings with his covenant people in all ages, it becomes us to consider how far, 1st. as a *nation*, we have grounds for humiliation, for penitence, and for conversion to God; and also how far, 2nd. as *individuals*, we have need of the same consideration, the same search, the same humility, the same conversion to God.

And, 1st. *as a nation.* Those who sin after the likeness of Israel and Judah's transgression, may expect condign punishment such as they were compelled to endure. If for a time the blow of Divine vengeance be suspended, because God is merciful, and gracious, full of long-suffering and compassion,

yet sooner or later that vengeance will alight on guilty nations and on guilty individuals that refuse to obey the call to penitence, and will not search and try their ways, and turn again to the Lord.

Now what, brethren, have been our privileges as a nation? Have we been exalted, as it were, to heaven by them? Let us not, therefore, be high-minded; but rather let us fear. For so was Capernaum! so was Bethsaida! And yet both were thrust down to hell. Do we glory in our possession of the full light of the Gospel?—that we live in a land where God's word is not a sealed book?—that we belong to a pure and Apostolic Church? Still, brethren, let us not be high-minded, but fear. For all these privileges were enjoyed in the highest degree by the Asiatic Churches, which had been planted and watered by the Apostles themselves, who had seen the Lord, and had an express revelation from Him, to warn them of their danger; and to exhort them to search and try their ways, and to turn again to the Lord. And yet, before the last Apostle had closed his earthly career, did not those churches, exalted as they were to the highest glory, depart from the truth, or else hold the truth in unrighteousness? Had they not done both so grievously as to be in danger of having the light removed from them during the life of the beloved disciple, St. John, who was employed as the amanuensis of the Holy Spirit, to caution them of their danger, and to beseech them to avert it by timely repentance?

And now where are they? Could we pursue this train of reflection, brethren, what hints for pious

thought and for penitent consideration would rise before us! And do not we live in times when national consideration, and national penitence, are needed? And to what quarter can we look for instruction, reproof, and warning, so calculated, with God's blessing, to lead to these desirable effects, as to the inspired writings of the Old and New Testament? Where shall we find truths so suited to our condition as in the sacred writings; especially in the letters written to the Asiatic Churches, at the dictation of Him who is "Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last;" and who commanded the beloved disciple to write what he saw and heard in the Apocalyptic vision, and to send it unto the Seven Churches? For if those Churches were once radiant with Gospel light as our own, but are now become either extinct, or their glory is departed; if the traces of their existence remind us, like the ruin of some noble fabric, of what they once were, and might have continued to be; ought not their fate to teach us a lesson, which it is our duty to learn, of the insecurity of external privileges without the due improvement of them? And if we do not learn that lesson, what will it avail us that we are members of a Church that can trace its existence to Apostolic times? What will it avail us that we have God's word as an unsealed, and sole rule of faith? What will it avail us that its blessed and saving truths shine in their full-orbed splendour in our Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies? What will it avail us that this has been our almost peculiar boast for centuries? What will it avail us that,

when the truth had been obscured by error, and been debased by superstition, and seemed like the last flickering light of a blaze, which trembles in the socket, and is on the point of extinction,—martyrs died in its defence,—error was removed,—superstition was discarded,—and the Gospel light shone forth again in all its primitive splendour at the Reformation? What will, what can, all this avail us, brethren? It will, it can, avail us nothing, so long as we are an impenitent, unconverted nation, in the sight of that Being who regards not the outward appearance, but the state of the heart; and who himself has taught us that he can dispense with sacrifice, but not with obedience: for "to hearken is better than sacrifice, and to obey, than the fat of rams." Should we not feel deep abasement of spirit, when we think of our national returns for all His blessings of Providence and Grace? Have our national returns been at all in proportion to our national blessings? No, brethren! or we should be, not as we are, a divided people, but of one heart and one language. We should be free from internal discord, and from external hostility; and we should become what we once were, and now are in name, a *national* church in the fullest sense of the term.

May we all have grace to "try and search our ways, and to turn again to the Lord." May our beloved Queen be not only the mother of Princes, but a nursing mother to the Church! May our Senators have wisdom equal to the emergencies of the times in which they live! May our Bishops have firmness to withstand error, in whatever shape

it may present itself! May the inferior Clergy, Priests, and Deacons, be vigilant and valiant for the truth ; stand in the good old paths, and direct men therein ! May the elements of discord within the Church, and those of hostility without it, be reduced to primitive order, and primitive unity ! May we all, as with the heart of one man, " search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord ! "

I have thought it right, brethren, to notice the duty of national consideration briefly ; let me now, 2ndly, concentrate your thoughts *on individual duty.*

There are times when the heart of a people seem moved as the heart of one man, but these times are rare. They form the epochs of our history; they constitute not the current events; and any appeal which did not recognise this great truth would be worse than vain. Not only would it fail of producing a right result, but it would be in danger of leading to a wrong one. In general it is as individuals, sensibly alive to our permanent interests, that we are most likely to be affected by a scrutiny into our ways; and to be led to timely penitence, and timely reformation. Such consequences are indeed inevitable, when self-scrutiny is searching and impartial; and it is accompanied, as it ever will be in such a case, with the enlightening and converting influences of the Holy Ghost. Let me aid you, brethren, in such a scrutiny; by suggesting to your minds truths which you have long held, but which may not as yet have produced their full effects upon your hearts and lives.

What then, as individuals, have been your ways ? Have you ever, by your own deliberate act, dedi-

cated yourselves to God in a solemn manner ; and from a deep conviction of your individual responsibility to Him for all the blessings which you possess, but especially "for redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ, the means of grace, and the hope of glory ?" Have you ever resolved that you would, through God's gracious assistance, renounce all other lords, and serve the Lord, Jehovah, alone ? Have you ever been made deeply sensible of the state to which sin original, and sin actual, have reduced you ? Have you ever had deep convictions of sin ; or, indeed, any convictions correspondent to your known condition, and conducive to real conversion ? Have you ever "acknowledged and bewailed your manifold sins, which from time to time you have most grievously committed by thought, word, and deed, against the Divine Majesty ; provoking, as you have done, most justly his wrath and ndignation against you ? Have you earnestly repented, and been heartily sorry for your misdoings ? Has the remembrance of them been grievous unto you, and the burden intolerable ?"—and observe, I do not ask whether you have said all this, but whether you have done it ? The former I know many of you can appeal to, but how do you feel concerning the latter ?—weigh this question. Has the language of confession in which you have approached God conveyed truly the sentiments of your own hearts, broken and contrite on account of sin felt, as well as confessed ; or has it been the formal acknowledgment of sin without any sense of guilt, or any dread of the misery to which, sooner or later, it will expose you ?

But further, brethren; supposing your penitence real, and your confession sincere, have you sought for pardon, where alone it can be found, in the blood of the everlasting covenant; that infinite atonement which the eternal Son of God made for you when, as the Word, "he became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory; the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth?" Have you heartily used the language of supplication which the Church teaches you, "Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord?"

Moreover, have you earnestly sought the gracious and promised influence of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to convince of sin; to enlighten, convert, sanctify; to edify, to comfort, and to prepare for heaven? Or have you resisted the Holy Spirit, grieved him, and caused him to withdraw his presence? Have you, in a spirit of self-confidence, sought to search and try your ways, and to turn again to the Lord in your own strength?—Vain attempt, and most fatal delusion, which none have tried with success; and which has for ever undone those who have trusted in them. For what saith Jehovah by his prophet, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant; that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a

fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow."

Once more, brethren, what evidence have you, that you have ever as yet searched and tried your ways, and turned again to the Lord? A tree is known by its fruits: penitence may be known by its fruits. Have you this evidence at least of your penitence and conversion? Have you diligently and perseveringly used all the appointed means of grace? Have you given heed to private reading, meditation, and prayer; and to public edification, in the instituted ordinances of the Church; and by your devout use of the Liturgy, and by your careful attention to the reading and expounding of God's holy word, and by due attendance upon the Sacraments, showed that with you at least religion is not a formal thing, but a spiritual means of raising you from the ruins of the fall, and fitting you for the enjoyment of God's favour, as it has been manifested in the gospel? Have you used all these as means to an end, instead of resting in them, as it is to be feared some do, as though they were every thing? Have you remembered the terms of obtaining spiritual blessings:—"Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." And that it is to those only who "wait upon the Lord," the promise is given, "they shall renew their strength:" and that "every one, who asks, receives; and he that seeks, finds; and to him that knocketh, is the door of mercy, pardon, and peace opened?"

These, brethren, are primary questions, whenever you are required "to search and try your ways, and to turn again to the Lord." They glance at, if they do not include, all those questions of high interest, which are connected with rigid self-scrutiny. If you cannot answer these questions aright, you are not prepared to carry on the important, the essential work, of self-examination, beyond the threshold of our inquiry. Upon this point, the Scriptures, the sole rule of your faith, is most explicit. Their testimony to our condition by nature is, that "in Adam we all die;" that God "hath concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all:" that "all have sinned," so as to deserve God's wrath for ever, not only through Adam, but after the likeness of his transgression; and that as sin original, and sin actual, stands in the account of God's reckoning against the human race, we are insolvent, and have nothing to pay.

Before we proceed, let me remind you, that salvation is wholly of *grace*, on God's part, and not through any merit in us; "for by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." The same truth is presented to our minds in another form thus, so as to include not only our condemnation, but our justification, in the sight of a pure and holy God. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that *every mouth* may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the

law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." And as we are brought out of the state of condemnation in which we are by nature, into a state of justification, through faith in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ; so when we wilfully commit sin, being in a state of justification, it is by faith in the same sacrifice that we are enabled to continue in that state; "for if any man," that is, any believer, "sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The language of sinners, therefore, is, and will be through the whole course of their existence, if the pardon obtained by the price of the precious blood of Christ be applied, "Not unto us, O Lord; not unto us; but unto thy name be the glory." This is the lan-

guage of the saints on earth. In heaven the burden of their strain will be the same; for all shall sing with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

These Scriptural views teach us most impressively that we need spiritual regeneration to change the corrupt bias of our sinful natures, and to take away from our hearts that carnality, which produces enmity against God, and insubordination to his law. Hence, "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And the same views teach us the necessity of conversion, if, though regenerate, we fall into such sin as dissolves, if it be persisted in, our covenant relation to God, and such as exposes us, without a change of heart and of life, to God's everlasting displeasure.

Upon these points, brethren, the *Articles of our Church* are most explicit. For, do they not teach us that by nature we are liable to God's wrath and condemnation; and that we cannot without "preventing grace," turn unto Him? Do they not teach us, that the taint of our nature is not slight, but deep; and that our departure from God has not been trivial, indicating infirmity merely, but that we are "very far gone from original righteousness," thereby showing that our nature is radically

defective in what constituted man's state of innocence, whether it regarded his capacity to be innocent, or his actual freedom from guilt? That as we need grace to "prevent," that is, "go before," us, to change the corrupt bias of our will and affections, and to give us a good will; so also we are daily and hourly in need of the same grace, to go with us, and to work in us and with us, all the good pleasure of God, when we have it? Do they not teach us, that for being accounted righteous before God, we must have a lively faith in the merits of Christ? And that a lively faith is evidenced by the fruits of an upright and holy life? And though they do not predicate *absolute* perfection of Christian character in this life, but affirm that "the infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated;" yet do they not affirm also, that good works are the fruits of faith and follow justification; that they do spring necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch, that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit? Is there not a strict unanimity in the teachings, both of the Scriptures and our articles, on these points; and if so, brethren, is not our duty clear? Should we not "search, and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord"?

These doctrines, brethren, are important, for they involve our *title to salvation*. And if that title be not scripturally established, what security have we for pardon, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the undoubted privileges of believers here? What security have we for eternal happiness in heaven hereafter, the abode of the justified by the righteous-

ness of Christ, and of the sanctified by the influences of the Holy Spirit; the myriads of those blissful abodes, ascribing, as they do, all glory, and power, might, majesty, and dominion, as it regards their own eternal security, to "Him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever?"

Brethren, let me earnestly entreat you, *individually* to examine these points thoroughly; to bring them to the only infallible test, the word of God, which assures us that the name of Christ is the only name under heaven, or given among men, whereby we can be saved; and that it is "in him we have redemption, through faith in his blood, the forgiveness of sins."

But, brethren, partakers of a holy calling, we may assume of some, and we hope of many, that you have reached this point. You know the truth. You have felt sorrow for sin; you have experienced the joy that flows from the pardoning mercy of God. What, then? Is it not expected of the initiated that they should go on to perfection? Of believers, that their course should be progressive, and their path, like that of the just, shining brighter and brighter to the perfect day? O, how do such disappoint our hopes, when they lay again a foundation for penitence! when they neglect God's ordinances! conform to the sinful customs of the world! evince self-indulgence, either in the flesh, or the spirit, or in both!

Now what, brethren, is the testimony of your consciences, in reference to this matter? Are you compelled to say in deep anguish of spirit, "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God

preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness: as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle?" O that I were as when a sense of the Divine presence kindled the flame of holy love and pure joy; and when, like Jacob at Bethel, I could say, while in holy converse with God, "How dreadful is this place; this is none other than the house of God; and this is the gate of heaven?" Or can you say "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day?"

It is of the highest importance, brethren, that you should thus be able to use the language of trust and hope in God. "Search, then, and try your ways, and if conscious of guilt, turn again to the Lord." The word *again* may be made doubly emphatic in your case: it may imply a return after departure from God; and it may imply the repetition of that act by which you first found pardon and peace. What do you do in other cases, brethren, when you find you have deviated from the right course, and discover that you are on the wrong track—do you not, without delay, seek to retrace your steps? Do you not, when those steps have been retraced, start afresh in your journey? The case is not otherwise as it regards your Christian course: you must re-

trace your steps; you must begin anew. The gate is strait, and the road is narrow that leads to heaven. There is but one approach to a God of infinite holiness, through Him who hath said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." There is but one way of reconciliation through the cross of Christ. There is but one way to solid, well-founded peace, whether in life or death, through faith in his blood—the blood of the atoning sacrifice. And there is but one way to heaven, unto those who have obtained reconciliation and peace, the narrow way of holiness.

These are ways, brethren, clearly marked out in God's word; are you walking in them, or have you declined from them? If you are doing the former, you are treading in safe paths. Such paths will bring you peace at the last. They afford you, at every step, the best security for peace. Seek, then, the grace of perseverance. But if you have declined from these ways, let me earnestly beseech you to return to them; for otherwise you will see a total eclipse of those attributes of God, which once excited hope and yielded peace to your souls. Otherwise you will see, in their full blaze of terror, those attributes that excite fear, fill the soul with dismay, and call to remembrance those solemn words—"the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched."

We have, brethren, noticed the state of those addressed in the words of our text; and we have endeavoured to give continued application to the doctrine, reproof, and instruction which they contain; and now it remains only to notice,

Thirdly,—The disposition of mind in which the Scrutiny, whether national or individual, should be made, and the strength in which it should be attempted.

Consider, first, the disposition of mind in which the scrutiny should be made. It should be in deep humility of soul, for the sins of which you have been guilty. It should be with care, lest you be imposed upon by the selfishness of the human heart, which is as deceitful as selfish, and as wicked as deceitful. It should be with a resolution to know the worst of your case. Think how liable you are to self-delusion, when you attempt the duty of self-examination! Think of the pride and ignorance that dwell in the hearts of men, not excepting those who are regenerate! How often do you imagine yourselves to be rich, and increased in goods, and to have need of nothing, while you are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked! Think how you are imposed upon by those sins which most easily beset you! How inveterate are those evil habits of which you are sensible, but from which you in vain try to release yourselves! How vigilant is your great adversary, the Devil, who lies in wait to deceive you; who attacks you on your weakest side; and who fails not, if needs be, "to transform himself into an angel of light," that he may conduct you as his prey to the regions of everlasting darkness!

Seek then, brethren, a humble spirit. Be clothed with humility. Remember that God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the lowly. Call to mind the two men in the parable, who went up into

the Temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. Recollect in what spirit they respectively drew near to God, and with what success they respectively returned to their homes. Bear in mind that "God be merciful to me a sinner," is a prevailing plea with Him. If you present that plea in a penitent frame, with the earnest desire of forgiveness, and with a lively faith in Christ, it shall prevail for you. The sweet accents of peace shall reach your ears; and you shall return to your homes justified, and not condemned. O beware of a self-sufficient, self-satisfied, self-righteous spirit, when you draw near to God. Such a spirit becomes not "the poor, whom he filleth with good things;" but "the rich, whom he sendeth empty away."

Consider, second, the strength in which the scrutiny should be attempted. Here you cannot be too cautious. Beware of relying on any strength, but that which is obtained by waiting upon the Lord. Trust not in man; trust not in ministers; trust not in yourselves. Let your reliance be upon Jehovah, your "righteousness and strength." Let the burden of your prayer be, "turn us again, O Lord, and we shall be turned; save us, and we shall be saved;" "create within us a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within us; restore unto us the joys of thy salvation."

Look unto Him, if you feel the power of inbred corruption; look unto Him, if you are entangled with the cares of this world; look unto Him, if you are tempted by the wiles of Satan, or by the exam-

ple of the ungodly; look unto Him, if you are in danger from riches, from honour, or from pleasure; look unto Him, if you are bowed down with the weight of sin which is too heavy for you. What is his command?—"Look unto me and be ye saved, for I am God, and there is none else, and besides me there is no Saviour."

In conclusion, brethren, examine yourselves; try yourselves; and as you approach the footstool of the Divine mercy, adopt the language of the Psalmist in one of his most humble, yet fervid, appeals to the omniscient and omnipresent God, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." I have led you, brethren, into no new train of reflection, but into such merely as appeared to me suitable for the last sabbath of the closing year; and also for my last address to you, as the Curate of this Parish.

My Ministry here, though brief, I have endeavoured to exercise at all times with a deep sense of its responsibility; and of the fearful doom of him who neglects to warn and admonish; to comfort, strengthen, and build up those entrusted to his care, according to God's word and ordinances. That Ministry, brethren, closes with the closing year.

Aware only of the fact that I had no prospect of permanent duty here, and that, in the course of a few months, some other scene of labour would most probably be appointed me by Him who ordereth all

events, the least as well as the greatest, it is only recently that I learned that a new sphere of duty as a Curate was assigned me, where I have the prospect of more permanent duty than among you. I mention this fact because I think it due, both to you and myself, that the true ground of my leaving you may be known; nor do I hesitate to say, that had there been a prospect of permanent duty here, I should not so soon have left you. For, brethren, not to allude to the perfect harmony which has subsisted between us, it must be well known to some, if not to all of you, that this is the first sphere in which I have exercised the functions of an Orthodox Minister; and that too in a Church, which deservedly bears the character from all right-minded men, of being ancient, apostolic, and pure.*

My convictions, brethren, with regard to truths which I had once denied, took place under circumstances which but rarely occur; and my conformity required a submission, on my part, which few are found willing to yield, should they be, as I was, in a position in which, humanly speaking, I could have secured immediate popularity and fair emolument for my services, had I joined the ranks of the Orthodox Dissenters, as I had ample opportunity of doing, and some overtures which must have ended in such a result, instead of conforming, as I did, without first ascertaining as a previous condition,

* See an able Sermon on this subject, by the Rev. Robert Eden, M.A., Minister of St. Mary's Chapel, Lambeth, and late Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, entitled, "The National Church of England; Ancient: Apostolical: Pure." (*Second Edition.*) Pigott, Kennington; Wertheim, Paternoster Row.

that I should after a short silence receive Episcopal ordination.*

It is necessary, brethren, thus to refer to facts, in order that my true position may be known. From those facts it will be evident, that I have not shrunk from any of the consequences involved in my preference for the Church of which I am now a Minister. These facts I have never brought before you in public; rarely have I adverted to them in private; and then only with a few of my more intimate acquaintance and friends. And my principal motive for referring to them now is, to show that there are, and ever will be, feelings and associations connected with this place, of such a character as are not likely soon to be obliterated from my mind.

For it is here, after a long and, to me at times, painful silence, I have, as opportunity permitted, endeavoured to preach truths which I once denied, and to submit to authority which I once disowned. Nor can I, after much wandering in the mazes of error, adequately describe the satisfaction which I feel, in finding myself again within the pale of a Church in which I was born, baptized, and received

* Our Bishops require three years silence from those who conform, after having previously taught opinions at variance with the doctrines and discipline of the Church. This they do partly as a test of sincerity, but chiefly as a guarantee to her Members that such persons are, after due probation, fit to be entrusted with the sacred office of the Ministry. In most Dioceses a degree at one of the Universities is indispensable. With both conditions the writer cheerfully complied. Silence in his own case was four years and a half, a part of that time being taken up in examining carefully the grounds of conformity; the greater part was absolutely requisite for a Degree at Cambridge; and the remainder, the interval between a Degree and Ordination.

my earliest instructions of Christian faith and duty. Not, brethren, that the satisfaction which I feel arises from these accidents of birth and early culture, but from the deep conviction that she holds all the grand and distinguishing doctrines of the gospel; and that she has long been a *Witness* for them, and is now, thank God, a *Keeper* of them. Never, in this life, shall I be able sufficiently to adore the mysterious guidance of that Providence by which my steps have been conducted within her sacred enclosure, by a way that I knew not; in eternity alone may I hope for ability duly to estimate, and duly to adore, that guidance.

Had the notice of my removal been earlier, or had the duties which have devolved upon me since I knew of it allowed, I should most probably have entered into the grounds of my conformity; and also into the process through which my mind passed in arriving at the firm, and as yet unshaken, conviction that our Church, purified as it was at the Reformation from the deadly errors of Romanism, is worthy of the confidence and regard of all candid and truth-seeking minds; because she is sound in her doctrines, simple in her forms, pure in her Liturgy, primitive in her orders, catholic in her spirit, and moderate in her tone against dissidents.

Circumstances, over which I have had no control, and which do not at all affect my convictions, or such ability as I may possess for the task, have hitherto prevented me from the discharge of a duty to which I am in some degree pledged, and which I hope at some future time to be able to discharge.

I allude, brethren, to a vindication of my views of Christian doctrine, and also of my conformity.*

The present occasion, brethren, seemed to me to justify this allusion to facts connected with myself. While deliberating on the best method of saying a parting word to you, I have felt the difficulty of the duty which I have had to perform. To maintain a perfect silence was impossible. My aim has been to observe the due medium between silence, and of saying more than the occasion required, or the time permitted.

Upon one point, brethren, I desire not to be silent. It is this. I feel deeply, and I would express warmly my conviction, that I shall ever have reason to bless God for my residence here; during that brief residence I have had time sufficient for gradually feeling my way into the duties of my new position. I have also had many opportunities afforded me for instruction and edification, under the able ministry and judicious counsel of my friend and brother in the ministry, the Rector of this

* To prevent all surmise as to the circumstances alluded to the writer would state, that in the first instance, while his change of sentiment was recent, he thought it right to pledge himself to an early publication against the errors of Unitarianism, which, as an educated Minister of that persuasion, he had preached for some years; but, on mature consideration, he thought that his testimony would lose nothing of its weight by having affixed to it the seals of time and experience. While an undergraduate at Cambridge there would have been an obvious impropriety in appearing before the public as an author; and since the taking of his B.A. Degree, at the earliest period allowed by the University, the preparation for two Episcopal Examinations, the one for Deacon's Orders, and the other for Priest's, together with ministerial labour and that of moderate tuition, has prevented him, as yet, from the discharge of the duty alluded to.

Parish. Nor is it the least source of gratification to my own mind, that in passing from my present sphere of duty to another, the one assigned me is so contiguous as to enable us to reciprocate those sentiments, and engage in those offices of friendship which has subsisted between us during my residence among you, and which attachment to common interests is likely to perpetuate.

Towards all of you, brethren, I shall cherish feelings of Christian attachment and good will. If towards some I feel the ties of friendship to be more closely drawn together, and its sympathies more numerous, yet I wish ever to bear in mind that preference should never lead to undue partiality. It is the duty of the Christian to extend his sympathies to the widest possible limits, consistently with his love of truth and holiness. He should check especially the tendency of the human heart to concentrate its affections, and to confine its regards to a few objects, who may minister to one's importance, or gratify the selfish principles of one's nature. For Christian love and sympathy are, in their nature, most expansive; and we have reason to suspect the character of those qualities which often bear their names, when they are altogether confined within the limits of that communion to which a preference, after due examination, is given; or even from the accidents of birth and education. The Christian should love all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and say concerning such, "grace, mercy, and peace be with them." Such, brethren, are my matured views on these topics; and to regulate my thoughts and actions by them

has for some time been, and I trust ever will be, the aim of my life.

Let me, finally, solicit your prayers on my behalf; that, in the future scene of my ministrations, I may have a single eye to the glory of the Triune Jehovah, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. May I have grace to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in all simplicity, and in all fidelity; and may you grow in grace, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, but especially by a pious and holy life.

And now, brethren, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith in Christ Jesus; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all honour and glory, might, majesty, and dominion, for ever and ever." Amen."

PIGOTT, PRINTER, KENNINGTON.

Joseph Fabrow Means
from the Author

REFLECTIONS ON THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CLAIMS OF THE METROPOLIS.

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE CITY CHAPEL, LONDON,

INTRODUCTORY TO THE

SECOND SERIES OF LECTURES TO MECHANICS,

ESTABLISHED BY THE

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION IN LONDON AND ITS VICINITY:

WITH AN APPENDIX,

FURTHER ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SUBJECT.

BY JOHN BLACKBURN,

MINISTER OF CLAREMONT CHAPEL, PENTONVILLE, AND ONE OF THE SECRETARIES OF THE ABOVE SOCIETY.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

TOWARDS the close of the last year the Committee of the Society for promoting Christian Instruction in London, requested my honoured Brother, the Rev. John Clayton, Jun. M.A., to deliver an Introductory Discourse to the second series of Lectures for Mechanics they were about to establish, and to which he kindly acceded.

A lamented illness, however, deprived them of his valuable services on that occasion, and it devolved on me to occupy his place.

When the Committee honoured me with a request to publish the Discourse I then preached, I found myself embarrassed, from the circumstance that it was delivered from brief pulpit notes, which rendered it difficult, and well nigh impossible, to recover.

Having, however, been favoured with the use of a copy, which an esteemed friend, who wrote in short hand, secured, I have, I trust, succeeded in presenting to the reader the substance of that Discourse, which I humbly pray may contribute to excite, in the hearts of the pious inhabitants of this Metropolis, a solicitude for the spiritual welfare of our fellow citizens, commensurate with their vast, their alarming wants!

J. BLACKBURN.

Pentonville,
March 27, 1827.

A DISCOURSE,

&c. &c.

2 KINGS vii. 9.

"*Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace.*"—

A FAMINE, which results from the attack of a besieging army, may be justly considered as one of the most fearful judgments which God, in his righteous dispensations, can send upon the guilty inhabitants of any city. Within the walls every countenance is marked with suffering, "the skin is black like an oven, because of the terrible famine;" "the children and sucklings swoon in the streets; they say to their mothers, Where is the corn and the wine? The young and the old lie on the ground, they faint for hunger on the top of every street."* Around the walls, and at every gate, a ferocious soldiery, provoked by opposition and excited by delay, employ all their energies to batter down the towers and to scale the battlements, that their revenge may be satiated in the destruction of their enemies. Such a visitation the inhabitants of Samaria were called to endure, when,

* Lamentations ii.

the Syrian army having long and closely beleagued the city, their stores of provisions were exhausted, and they were reduced to an extremity of want. Forgetful of the luxuries of former days, the famished inhabitants sought to allay the insufferable cravings of their exhausted nature, by means the most revolting and unnatural. Delicate women violated all the instincts of the maternal bosom, and preyed upon their own children, and the most filthy garbage became to its possessors more precious than gold.

At such a time, when selfishness triumphed over all the better feelings of our nature, those miserable inmates of the city, who, through disease, could not assist in its defence, but whose wants still craved a share of its scanty supply, were doubtless contemplated by the more vigorous inhabitants with no friendly eye. Loathsome through their maladies, and useless through their weakness, they were probably forbidden to claim supplies; and a dreadful alternative, the sword of the infuriated besieger, or the mortal pangs of famine, awaited them. Such, I conceive, was the situation of the four Samaritan lepers to whom our text refers, when they left the gates, and sat down under the wall of the city. They saw the camp of their enemies before them, in all its formidable array, but, impelled by hunger, they said to each other, "Why sit we here until we die? If we enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now come, therefore, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die."

Amidst the twilight of eventide they therefore advanced towards the camp; silence reigned around;

they looked—listened—doubted—for the ominous stillness, at that hour of music and revelry, was to them inexplicable. Their imaginations transformed every shadow into some stern warrior, about to arrest their progress, and they advanced with slow and hesitating steps, trembling for the result. At length they approach the nearest tent, and lo! it is empty! They pass on through the camp to its uttermost bounds, but no man is there! Mysterious and terrific sounds of iron chariots and mighty armies had rushed upon the ears of the Syrians, and panic took possession of their hearts. "Then were they in great fear, where no fear was;" for God scattered them that were encamped against the city.

Their camp, with all its ponderous baggage, abundant provision, and extensive treasures, was left behind. The famished lepers of Samaria in one tent find rich viands, and they eat; in another, the choicest wines, and they drink; in a third, costly cloathing and abundant treasure, and they adorn and enrich themselves. At length, appetite fails and curiosity tires; reflection steals upon them, and they recollect the miseries that still reign in Samaria! Shame on them! that the afflictions of their brethren were not sooner regarded. Justly may they, with confusion and fear, exclaim, "We do not well, for this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace."

Now, in discoursing this night on THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CLAIMS OF THE METROPOLIS, I will not disguise my deliberate conviction, Brethren, that the conduct of the Christian inhabitants of LONDON towards their fellow-citizens "who know not God, and obey not his Gospel," has too much resembled that of the Samaritan lepers; eager to enjoy the provisions of the Gospel

themselves, they have had "bread enough and to spare," but have forgotten those "who perish with hunger."

For, while I joyfully concede that, to a great extent, the spiritual wants of the rising generation are provided for,* yet I must contend that the Christian Instruction of the vast adult population of our city has been strangely neglected, so that we may adopt the self-reproaching language of the text as our own, "We do not well: for this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace." To justify these statements, allow me to illustrate three particulars.

I. That we are in possession of a blessing peculiarly adapted to benefit our fellow-citizens.

II. That we have been guilty of a culpable omission in neglecting to communicate it. And,

III. That we should experience powerful emotions at the remembrance of our past indifference.

I. That we are in possession of a blessing peculiarly adapted to benefit our fellow-citizens.

Mankind, in their unconverted state, justify the affecting declaration of St. Paul, that they are "hateful and hating one another." Unaided by Christian precept or example, they have never originated any benevolent scheme for the mitigation of human wretchedness, and, therefore, we can neither expect from them the power or

* Vide Appendix A.

the disposition to impart to their species any spiritual blessing. The joyful sound of the Gospel has never gladdened their hearts, and consequently they will not adopt the language of the angelic messengers, and say to their fellow-men, "We bring you good tidings of great joy, for unto you is born a SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord." It is the Christian, who in his own heart has realized the blessedness of "the people that know the joyful sound," and has, by actual experiment, proved the wondrous adaptation of the Gospel to his own necessities, and has felt its transforming efficacy on his own mind; it is he that is prepared to communicate to others the most gladsome intelligence, and to illustrate the import of that divine promise, "I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing." For experimental Christianity is distinct from every other science. In the whole circle of human knowledge we first acquire the simplest elements, that we may advance to the more important principles and profound experiments; but in learning the Gospel, the great peculiarities and the most surprising experiments are known first, and, consequently, that man who is renewed in the spirit of his mind, and has tasted that the Lord is gracious, can and will communicate his knowledge to others, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Let me then, Brethren, illustrate to you how the Gospel, even in your hands, is adapted to bless our fellow citizens.

1. *As they are conscious of guilt.*

A belief in the existence of God, as the creator of our frames and the father of our spirits, necessarily carries with it an obligation to do his will. We pause not to discuss how that will is disclosed. It may, perchance, be

read in the works of nature, or whispered by the voice of conscience, or revealed in the inspired word. But where is the honest man that will affirm that he has obeyed its dictates? I appeal to the consciousness of each hearer, whether the statements of scripture are not confirmed by facts. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God—There is none righteous, no not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one."* Men may, for a season, exclude reflection, and divest themselves of the fear which guilt inspires, but the period will arrive, when the terrors of the Almighty shall possess them, and the consciousness of guilt, like a spectre, shall ever haunt their paths; when their joy and peace shall whither like the blighted foliage of Jonah's gourd, for there is a worm at the root; "there is no peace saith my God to the wicked."

In a corrupt population like our own, many are the wretched victims of these pangs, who, in the inquietude of their minds, wander in a vain search after that tranquillity and gladness, which the favour of God can alone restore. They may ask, Can this heavy guilt be removed? Can these corroding thoughts be dissipated? Can this constant apprehension of danger be allayed? But Reason cannot answer—Philosophy is dumb: the favourite nostrums for "a mind diseased," which the world prescribes and administers are vain. But you, my Christian brethren, know the blessed remedy which divine mercy has provided for the miserable and the

* Rom. iii. 10—23.

guilty. The declarations of the Gospel can alone meet the case, and you can make them known. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life"—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin"—"He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Now it is in the power of the humblest individual, who knows the Gospel himself, to communicate these glad tidings. I call not such to the pulpit, or to the platform, to become the public instructors of their fellow men, but to make those friendly visits, and cultivate that private intercourse which the Christian Instruction Society is established to advance;* then shall they share in the pleasure of turning sinners to righteousness, and know the joys which belong to him who saveth a soul from death.

We possess the means of blessing our fellow citizens—

2. *As they are exposed to temptation.*

The metropolis of a great empire must necessarily be, in the present state of human society, the focus of vice. Such was Nineveh, such was Babylon, such was Rome, —SUCH IS LONDON. Here, therefore, is to be found, in every district, the theatre, the masquerade, the gaming-table, the brothel. Here are to be purchased, in every street, books that, by the combined influence of fascinating poetry and perverted argument, tend to weaken all moral restraints, and to hurry the excited but unhappy youth who is charmed by them into the snares of pollution, dishonesty, and ruin. O how many manly youths have paid in this city the forfeiture of their lives to the offended laws of the country, who were first seduced from the paths of morality by the lying sophisms

* Vide Appendix B.

of an infidel philosophy, by the entreaties or the villany of improper associates, or by the restless importunities of a polluted and unbridled imagination!

Into this infectious and polluted atmosphere multitudes are introduced from day to day; multitudes, alas, who, by the tendencies of their fallen nature, are most susceptible of its contagious influence; for while the man who possesses vigorous health may expose himself to the pestilential air of an hospital, and perchance escape, he who has a sickly frame inhales the poison for which his constitution was prepared, and languishes and dies. Angelic beings may pass untainted amidst the moral contagion of this our vast hospital, but mere human virtue must sicken and expire beneath its influence.

How then are we to be preserved? What blessed charm can resist the infection? Philosophy may discourse about the loveliness of virtue and the deformity of vice, the dictates of reason and the fitness of things; but cold are these motives, and feeble are these bonds. The green withs which bound Sampson were not so easily torn asunder, as such restraints are broken by the excited passions of our fallen nature. The question then recurs, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and the experienced Christian has a ready and effective answer, "by taking heed thereto according to the Word"—that Word which proclaims the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and reveals the all-conscious presence of our God—that word which speaks of goodness the most influential, and promises grace to triumph in every temptation—that word which, ingrafted in the soul, has saved it from the storms of passion, the fascinations of the harlot, and the witcheries of a sybil world. And that word, my Christian bre-

thren, you possess, understand, and enjoy, and will you not seek to communicate it? "This is a day of good tidings, and will ye hold your peace?"

We possess the means of blessing our fellow citizens—

3. *As they are liable to suffering.*

Mankind are born to trouble, and sorrow is the portion they inherit, let them dwell where they may. In the secluded hamlet, in the busy city, in the distant colony, they alike realize the consequences of transgression, for every soil produces the bitter herbs which sprang from the earth when innocence ascended to heaven.

In a vast metropolis like ours, however, suffering is concentrated, for who can describe those woes which result from the depression of trade, the want of employment, the failure of credit, and the effects of villany, which embitter the hearts of thousands? Who can paint the scenes of wretchedness which the dark windings of our City furnish, and which result from the casualties of labour, the progress of disease, the cravings of hunger, the march of crime, the ravages of death? Think, my hearers, of a multitude of sufferers, who, having lost their credit, property, and prospects, in the unparalleled calamities which recently laid waste many country districts, have sought concealment in this Babylonic city, where they hope to spend their few and evil days in the seclusion which poverty and wretchedness so well enjoy! Ah, you are borne along by the animated stream of population, which flows through our splendid squares and noble streets in all its gay and varying hues, and you ask "*Where* is the distress?" Did you not see that pale, dejected man who glided across the street with a quick step, and as though he dreaded observation? follow him through that dark dirty

court to the miserable garret where he dwells, and where his suffering family anxiously await his arrival. See! he throws himself in anguish upon his bed, exhausted by want, and without a friend; he desires "strangling rather than life;" and what will you say to such a man? Will you tell him it is his *fate*, and that he must exercise stoical indifference? No, Christian, you can comfort him with those consolations "wherewith ye yourselves are comforted of God." You can tell him of that God who has been, in every generation, "a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat." You can tell him of that Saviour who himself became poor that he might impart comfort to all that mourn, bind up the broken hearted, and save the souls of the needy. Let him but receive these truths, which you can communicate, and his wants shall not tempt him to violate the laws, his sorrows shall not drive him to the last cowardly, desperate, act of the worldling, who plunges into eternal anguish to escape the woes of the passing hour! And will you withhold these? "We do not well, for this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace."

We possess the means of blessing our fellow citizens—

4. *As they are subject to death.*

It is the law of nature, and the sentence of God, that man shall die! and what a harvest for death do these vales of the Thames present. *Twelve hundred and fifty thousand* human beings now stand ready for his sickle. *Twelve hundred and fifty thousand!* Ah, the number comes glibly from our lips, but it describes an appalling multitude when we attempt to realize the amount. Well, of this multitude death reaps *twenty thousand* every year! Thus he puts his sickle every day to the

work, and *sixty* are cut down! What, have *sixty* died in London to-day! Yes, at this hour, in this street, perchance in the next house, there may be some one enduring the bitter pangs of dissolution. And has he been left ignorant of God and of his Christ? Ignorant of that Gospel which brings life and immortality to light, ignorant of that grace which gives peace, yea, songs of triumph in the dying hour? O, does he now despair of mercy and cry, "No man hath cared for my soul."—What shall we say, Brethren? "We do not well, for this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace."

I now proceed to the second part of the subject, which is to show

THAT WE HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF A CULPABLE OMISSION IN NEGLECTING TO COMMUNICATE THESE BLESSINGS.

That an omission of this part of Christian duty has long existed in London, I presume few are prepared to deny; and I will therefore attempt to explain how it has happened that in a City, celebrated for its Christian philanthropy, a vast population of adult inhabitants have been neglected.

1. *Because their melancholy circumstances have not been realized.*

Had the lepers, whose conduct we condemn, had they once thought of the actual condition of their brethren, methinks they would have hurried away to communicate the gladsome intelligence of plenty and freedom, as soon as the first cravings of exhausted nature were allayed; but they *did not consider*; absorbed in the business of self-indulgence, they thought not of their neighbours,

associates, and brethren, who now, black with famine, and emaciated by disease, longed for the broken fragments of their abundance. And this, alas! has been our conduct towards our fellow-citizens: we mingle with them in the crowded streets, we deal with them in the public markets, and employ them in our various manufactories; but we never pause to ask, Have these men souls—what are their habits, hopes, and destinies? Yes, we have not realized their perilous condition, but have sunk into a state of apathy concerning them, such, perhaps, as we might be permitted to indulge, did we indeed inhabit "a world without souls."

Christian Brethren, we have often hurried across this vast City, and taken our nearest course through its narrow lanes and winding courts, in the pursuit of business, and have glanced at their squalid or guilty inhabitants, and have hastened on as if we feared they would impart contagion at a touch; but have we considered them as objects of "Christian Instruction," or of friendly expostulation—have we considered that they are rushing forward to eternity, with all the impurity and guilt of their transgressions resting upon them! Had we reflected on these, surely our tenderest compassion and most active zeal must have been awakened by the thought!

We have been negligent of our duty to our fellow-citizens—

2. *Because their relative influence has not been regarded.*

London, as the residence of royalty, the seat of legislation, the mart of trade, the field of enterprize, the road to wealth and honour, is the annual resort of multitudes of every class of society. Here the most in-

fluential persons of the kingdom—our nobles, senators, and magistrates, attended by their households, sojourn. Here the most useful members of society, the traders and agriculturalists of the empire repair. Here the most susceptible and important part of the community, I mean the young of both sexes, continually visit, some to behold the glittering shows and metropolitan grandeur of our City, others to obtain professions and to prosecute studies in the sciences or in art. It is most apparent then, that if the inhabitants of London be cursed with a moral plague, these visitors are fearfully exposed to the infection; they breathe the same atmosphere, they are subject to daily contact, and they cannot escape. They imbibe pernicious principles, acquire corrupt habits, and return to our country towns and more remote villages, carrying the deadly poison with them, and thus it spreads

"Through all the veins of our vast empire."

In fact, the facilities of intercourse which now exist between the Metropolis and the remotest parts of the kingdom, however agreeable they may be to the trader and the tourist, are the sluices through which vice flows, with a rapid and unobstructed current, from this vast reservoir to the humblest village of the land.

But of the visitors to this City, alas! how many do not return, for as it, like a mighty whirlpool, draws within its vortex multitudes from many a league around, so many become the victims of its fatal influence, and are quickly dragged down to perdition! Have not the pastors of our churches ofttimes witnessed this! Many a youth, the son of pious parents, and the child

of many prayers, brought to this Metropolis for the advantages of trade or study, having been corrupted by its vices, has lost his health, reputation, and peace, and sought at their hands, in the last hour, for the consolations of that religion which blessed his childhood.

The conversion of men is of the greatest moment, dwell where they may; yet the importance of that work is increased, as their relative influence is extensive; for as a grain of gunpowder is explosive any where, but most dangerous when ignited amidst a million more, so the facilities of propagating mischief are fearful, when a dense mass surrounds on every hand. O, had we realized the baneful influence which is thus exerted, should we not, like Aaron, have rushed between the living and the dead, that the plague might be stayed?

We have omitted this duty—

3. *Because our own necessities have been exaggerated.*

The lepers, it is probable, had an all-absorbing view of their own necessities, Long had they pined without a meal! long had they wandered without clothing! long had they suffered without medicine! These wants must be supplied. But did they not obey the dictates of curiosity, as well as satisfy the claims of nature? Was there not a dominant principle of selfishness, which led them to look at their own things rather than on the things of others? And has not the same principle influenced the minds of too many Christians in this City. To BUSINESS, that great metropolitan idol—BUSINESS, they devote every hour of six successive days of uninterrupted labour! and then on the Sabbath they seek personal enjoyments—they must hear three sermons, or are contented with two, and indulge themselves in the social circle during the remaining sacred hours which

might be most beneficially employed amongst the destitute around them. Undoubtedly the salvation of his own soul, and of those immediately committed to his care, should be the first objects with every man; and fearful will be his condition who at the last shall cry, "they made me a keeper of vineyards, and my own vineyard I have not kept." But let it be remembered that, as in our animal economy exercise is as much needed for the purposes of health as food, so in affairs of the soul, not only are the provisions of God's house needful to spiritual health, but also that regular exercise of Christian graces which a work like ours calls forth.

Let no pious Christian say, I fear to sacrifice a part of my Sabbath, lest I should lose some spiritual advantage; engage in this work with a simple regard to the glory of God and the love of souls, and then that God who supplies his ministers and missionaries with great enjoyment in the work to which they are called, will also make these "visits of mercy" profitable to you also. Follow your Master, who even on the Sabbath went about doing good and you shall not lose your reward.

It is not, indeed, desirable or necessary that Christians should vacate their seats in the house of God at the accustomed hour of worship to accomplish it; but if it were, would not every devoted pastor rather see the place of a wise and holy brother of the church occasionally unoccupied from such a cause, than have the bitter reflections that excessive delicacy towards him, or an exaggerated view of his own wants, had restrained that efficient labourer from works of usefulness for which he is qualified, and which the surrounding population so much need?

This duty has been neglected—

4. Because the design of divine goodness has been overlooked.

What could these selfish lepers have thought whilst revelling amidst the rich viands and abundant treasures of the Assyrian camp? Were they presumptuous enough to suppose that the recent miracle was wrought for them alone? That the mystic sounds broke on the Assyrian camp, and that the panic spread through their bands simply *that they might eat!* Were not these wonders accomplished for the thousands of Samaria also? Yes, that the power, fidelity, and grace, of the God of Elisha might be seen in their deliverance. Nor was the Gospel, my Christian Brethren, sent for you alone, but for others also. "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing," was the promise of our God to Abraham, which is fulfilled in every believer to the present hour. Therefore the Saviour addressed his disciples as "the lights of the world," appointed to dispel the gloom of ignorance; and as "the salt of the earth," designed to counteract the moral putrescence of impurity and crime. Not that he endowed them with those properties by which they should involuntarily impart knowledge and counteract sin, but as he gave them principles and dispositions by which they were excited to dispense these blessings.

On the last great day of the feast of tabernacles, our Lord stood up amidst the crowded multitudes in the temple, and cried, "He who believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, shall prove a cistern whence rivers of living water shall flow,"* by which the solitary places shall be gladdened, and the desert rejoice and blossom

* John vii. 37, 38.—Dr. Campbell's Translation.

as the rose. Are there not thousands enrolled amongst the disciples of Christ in this City, of whom this passage is in no way descriptive! They dispense with *personal* service for Christ and his kingdom, because they subscribe their money to aid the labours of others, or, it may be feared, they constantly revolve in an orb of universal selfishness, delighting in the pleasures of earth, and dreaming of the joys of heaven. They forget that we are not to please ourselves—for even Christ pleased not himself—that we are to take up the cross, and follow him in the path of self-denial.

Such Christians, were they driven like those of Jerusalem into other countries, would not, like them, "go every where preaching the Word"—nor will they gain for the churches to which they belong the commendation given to that of Thessalonica, that from them "the Word of the Lord sounded forth to all the regions round about."

Not that I desire to introduce into the Christian ministry, men who possess neither graces nor gifts to fit them for that holy office; but I would enforce the rule of St. Peter, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*

Let, then, each Christian solemnly place himself as in the presence of his Lord, to whom, ere long, he must give an account of his stewardship, and then ask, what "gift" he possesses, what "talent" he can employ for the salvation of his fellow men. The field of labour needs diversified acquirements, and he that is not fit for one department, may be adapted for another; and let him especially remember, that he fails to accomplish the designs of divine mercy, and impedes the progress

* 1 Pet. iv. 10.

of the Gospel, if "he stand in the market place all the day idle," and neglects to ask, with earnest prayer and devout willingness, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do."

Let us now advance to the third observation—

THAT WE SHOULD EXPERIENCE POWERFUL EMOTIONS AT THE REMEMBRANCE OF OUR PAST INDIFFERENCE.

"We do not well, for this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace." I wish not to exaggerate the extent of our indifference—the amount of our guilt; but can we reflect on the preceding statement without—

1. *An emotion of shame for palpable neglect.*

The churches of London have not, it is true, been indifferent to that solemn declaration of the Saviour, which he authoritatively addressed to his disciples, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name amongst *all nations*;" for, at a vast expense of life and treasure, the Gospel has been sent to the far distant heathen, yea, our antipodes have received the glad tidings of salvation from the messengers of this City; nor have we forgotten the claims of the villages and towns of distant counties, to which our missionaries have been sent, instructed to wander amongst the thin and scattered population of rural districts; but the principle which I conceive to be involved in the last sentence of that gracious commission, "beginning at JERUSALEM," has been fearfully neglected. Shame to us! we care for the distant heathen, whilst those who breathe the same atmosphere, and walk the same streets, are overlooked. I wish not to indulge in sarcasm when confusion and grief are the more appropriate emotions, but surely the idolatrous inhabitants of savage and pagan

cities might exult over the neglected inhabitants of London, were it known that whilst many missionaries are sent to preach in their streets and by their way sides, there is no missionary employed to seek after those who toil in the factories, and crowd the public ways of this vast and profligate, though professedly Christian City. The first disciples sought to impart to their townsmen and kinsfolk the tidings of Messiah; the woman of Samaria intreated her neighbours to "Come and see the man who was indeed the Christ;" but with shame we must confess, that we are verily guilty, for this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace.

Whilst we reflect on the spiritual condition of this Metropolis, we may well indulge in—

2. *An emotion of sorrow for irreparable mischief.*

Methinks, during the hours these lepers indulged in their revelry, gratifying their appetites, and loading their persons well nigh to excess, another and another of the famishing inhabitants of Samaria fainted and died! O, had they come earlier, that generous wine would have given new pulsations to the languid heart; that delicate meat would have allayed the cravings of the exhausted stomach; but, no: they tarried and their brethren died!

And where, my hearers, are the *twenty thousand* souls that entered ETERNITY from this City last year? in what division of the invisible world are they now? I pronounce not on their state! but have we not cause to weep, when we consider that many of them have sunk down to irreparable ruin, whilst we have not made one effort for their deliverance! Think of the condition of a lost soul under the frown of our God for ever! Think, my Brethren, of that soul lost through our apathy and unbelief, and then we must bow down with

sorrowful confessions, and cry, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight we cannot be justified."

We may doubtless entertain—

3. *An emotion of alarm for threatened evils.*

The selfish lepers, when they awoke from the apathy in which they had too long indulged, exclaimed with alarm, "If we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us;" and therefore hastened to announce the gladsome intelligence to the centinels, and they quickly spread it through the city. Now if they entertained a fear of punishment from their Lord and King, may not we, my Brethren, apprehend some just visitation from HIM, who, walking amidst the golden candlesticks, addresses his lukewarm churches, with "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen; and repent and do thy first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place except ye repent." He has often made the sins of his people the instruments of their correction, and the vast population abandoned by us to all the seductions of infidelity, popery, and crime, may become a fearful scourge to the Christian church. Thus, the Romish priesthood in France left the people uninstructed in the true principles of religion, and neglected to sow "the incorruptible seed of the word" in the public mind, till the agents of an Infidel philosophy entered on the fallow field, and scattered those tares which soon brought forth a fearful harvest of anarchy and blood; not that I perceive any intellectual adaptation in the present advocates of infidelity amongst us, to the task of spreading their anti-social and demoralizing principles, to an extent which might produce a convulsion dreadful as that which shook the fair capital of

France. No; the feeble objections, the unblushing falsehoods, the low abuse, and the moral degradation of those who are foremost in this work of evil, form a striking contrast to the learning, eloquence, and influence of the Continental unbelievers. But let it never be forgotten, that when God designs to correct a people for their sins, he can employ, as in the case of Egypt, either some mighty angel to smite the transgressors, or swarms of mean and loathsome insects to plague the land.

The emissaries of Popery also are not inactive in this City:* besides the influence which they have evidently obtained over some daily journals, they have also enlisted, or perhaps hired, some popular writers well skilled in addressing the public mind, to disguise its errors, and to palliate its crimes. Whilst, in our sweetest poetry and most attractive prose, its charms are unveiled in all their fascinations to the unhallowed imaginations of the ardent and the young; Heaven forbid, my Brethren, that Popery, denounced of God, and abhorred of all who love liberty and truth, should rear its head again in this Protestant capital, and renew those scenes of persecution which its great market-place once exhibited.

The Saviour may employ yet another and more fearful mode of correcting us still:—he may withhold from us his genial influence, and leave our churches in all the coldness and gloom of night,—a night produced by the withdrawment of the Sun of Righteousness! No pious churchman can contemplate the state of parochial religion in this Metropolis without solicitude and alarm,† nor can an evangelical dissenter recollect the affecting changes which have occurred amongst the separate churches of this City without humiliation and sorrow.

* Note C. † Note D.

Whilst those houses of prayer, in which Charnock, and Howe, Goodwin and Alsop, Ridgley and Gale ministered, have been razed to the ground, how fearfully has the Gospel been withheld or abandoned in other places where our faithful confessors once laboured. Yea, is it not a fact, that in the place where Robert Fleming, profound in learning and powerful in eloquence, proclaimed the glory of the Saviour, detected the errors of Popery, and predicted its certain destruction, that in that very place a mountebank preacher of infidelity, now blasphemes his Maker, outrages decency, and breaks the peace!* May we not fear yet further desolations! Let us then deplore the neglect of one part of our duty as Apostolical churches, and pray that God will not leave us to a cold, formal, heartless Christianity. A curse was pronounced on Meroz, yea, a bitter curse on the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty! Let our consciences decide how far we deserve its maledictions, and let us hasten to our duty, saying, "If we tarry, some mischief will come upon us, for we do not well, this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace."

We should cherish,—

Lastly,—*The emotion of pity for present destitution.*

Those who have already perished in a fearful ignorance of the Gospel, are placed beyond our reach. Once they dwelt in our streets, and sojourned, perhaps, beneath our roof, but the opportunity of usefulness was neglected, and their spirits have flitted by us, into the regions of an unalterable destiny! But we are still surrounded by an untold multitude,—the candidates of Immortality. Think, my friends, of their condition on

* Note E.

each returning Sabbath. Excluded from public worship on the one hand by their poverty and indifference, or on the other by the inadequate accommodation provided for them in the sanctuaries around, they spend the sacred day appointed by God for their religious improvement in all the listlessness of squalid indolence, or in all the riot of vulgar excess. A Sunday Newspaper designed to pander their corrupt propensities, occupies the hallowed morning, and the ale-house or the tea-garden receives them in the evening; and the Lord's day closes on them, not with praise and prayer, but amidst scenes of drunkenness and profanity, where vice revels with an unblushing front.* Shall the same apathy continue to prevail? Shall we not have pity on souls thus ready to perish? Shall we not evince the spirit that was in Christ Jesus?—He beheld the devoted city and wept over it, and commissioned his Apostles to begin their ministry in Jerusalem. Are you ready to ask, What is to be done?—It was this question that led to the formation of the Society for promoting Christian Instruction in London and its Vicinity, which purposes, "irrespective of the particular denomination of Christians, to advance evangelical religion amongst the inhabitants of the Metropolis, by promoting the observance of the Lord's day; the preaching of the Gospel; the establishment of prayer meetings and Sabbath schools; the circulation of religious tracts, accompanied with a systematic visitation; and by the establishment of gratuitous circulating libraries;—with every other method which the Committee, from time to time, may approve, for the accomplishment of the great object contemplated by this Society."

* Note F.

This is the outline of its operations, and I believe it will be conceded, that though the object is vast and the difficulties multifarious, yet, that in this City we are supplied with many facilities. The materiel of moral improvement is possessed here in greater abundance than in any other spot on the earth, and therefore I would beg permission to urge upon the several classes of my hearers, the duty of co-operating in a work to which we are peculiarly called, by the spiritual destitution of multitudes around.

To *the Ministers of the Gospel in this City* present, and to their beloved associates, I would respectfully but earnestly address myself, not indeed to excite them to active and zealous efforts for the general extension of Christ's kingdom, for in that matter they are "in labours more abundant;" but I would presume to remind them, that while ministering for the conversion of a world, it behoves them especially to regard the spiritual interests of that great Metropolis in which the providence of God has appointed them to minister. In the weekly, aye, I might say, daily deliberations which occupy our attention, my beloved Brethren, the benighted Heathen,—the sceptical or superstitious European,—the wronged and ignorant Hibernian,—the untutored peasant of some distant county, successively share in our Christian sympathies and benevolent regard, whilst the necessities of our fellow-citizens are forgotten, as if we dwelt in a celestial city,—in the New Jerusalem, which exempt alike from the pollutions and consequences of sin, enables us to look down with undivided and intense solicitude on those dark spots of the globe, where ignorance and transgression brood in all the gloom of a moral night! But, my honoured Brethren, a darkness, palpable as that which gathered around the

cities of Egypt, rests upon this our City also, and the vast majority of its inhabitants are enveloped in the gloom. It is not enough to say, that in our sanctuaries "the true light now shineth," to which they may approach, for those who do approach are, we may hope, seeking its illumination; but the multitude "hate the light, neither come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved," and therefore it must be borne to them. The darkest recesses of the Capital must be explored, and our Jerusalem "must be searched as with candles."

Our Society cannot presume to crave the personal exertions of the Pastors of our churches beyond the cheerful aid they furnish us in occasional services like the present; the Students of our theological academies, we are happy to state, are devoting their leisure Sabbaths, much to their own honour, for the advancement of this good work. But we may crave, with holy importunity, that our Brethren will encourage, by their approbation and influence, the devoted Christians in their several spheres, to prosecute that important part of our plan, Christian visitation, which has appeared to some highly-gifted ministers as the most effective mode to dispel that darkness which is at once our reproach and our curse. And O bear with me, Brethren, while I declare my conviction, that unless some methods of Christian instruction are vigorously prosecuted, our sanctuaries will eventually be deserted, and remain in all the silence of spiritual death, "the funeral monuments of our departed religion."

Permit me to address *the devoted members of Christian churches.* You, my hearers, by your personal exertions or pecuniary aid, may greatly accelerate the progress of this work. For to explore the many avenues of this City, and to visit the crowded dwellings they

contain, requires a multitude of agents, so that we cannot spare you.

Do you ask for authority to justify your attempt to impart spiritual instruction to others? Look to the records of the Apostolical churches, where we find, that the Brethren were a savour of the knowledge of Christ in every place, and that women also laboured with the Apostles in the extension of the Gospel.* The Church of Rome, though now mixed with many abuses, has retained this feature of primitive Christianity, and employs lay brethren and devout sisters to visit the cottages of the poor; and by their charities and their prayers, they have won more converts to that church than all the ponderous volumes of its most successful polemics.

And in our own country, and in our own times, what body of Protestants have been more prosperous and useful than the Wesleyan Methodists, which I attribute to their avowed employment of all the gifts and graces with which they are entrusted for the increase of experimental religion around them. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus, who though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." "Freely ye have received, freely give."

I doubt not but many difficulties may present themselves as formidable, perhaps as insuperable! Be assured from the poor themselves you have nothing to fear! In a few isolated cases, profane replies and stern refusals have been given, but generally the visiters have been received with kindness! The poor have felt honoured by the benevolent and disinterested attentions of their superiors, whose sympathies have won their regard and prepared them for their message. It is a de-

* Phil. iv. 3.

lightful fact, that Christian females, in the service of this Society, explore, without apprehension of danger or fear of insult, courts and alleys into which an officer of justice could not enter without solicitude for his safety. Say not, therefore, under the influence of spiritual sloth, "There is a lion in the way, there is a lion in the street;" but go from door to door with your message of grace, and many shall be found with gratitude to say, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?" Let not the dread of infidelity deter you. Few, very few of the lower classes are systematic infidels; they have only adopted that fearful epithet, because they live in sin and are estranged from God; when, therefore, you speak to them with fidelity and tenderness, you shall find their ribald objections yield to the authority of God, and the voice of conscience. O, ye Christians of London, let me intreat you to care for your brethren; associate with your pious neighbours, and say, "We will explore that lane, we will visit that court, we will canvass that alley." The blessing of those who are ready to perish will come upon you, and when death approaches, it will be a matter of gladness to you, that you have not lived in vain!

There are others to whom I would earnestly appeal for pecuniary support. You have, by the blessing of Providence, acquired, in this City, a competency, or, perhaps, a fortune! In yonder factory you realized thousands, and do you owe nothing to those humble labourers by whose aid those thousands were acquired? By the sweat of their brows you eat bread, yea, fare sumptuously every day; and is it not reasonable, that whilst you partake of their carnal things, they should receive of your spiritual things? Bestow on them and their children not only the charities of this life, but the

bread from heaven, the enduring riches! and, O, Brethren, recollect that at the final account, indifference to their highest interests will be condemned by that Judge who confided to you so responsible a stewardship.

And, finally, I would address those *Mechanics for whose instruction the present course of Lectures is undertaken.** My Brethren, we engage in this service without pecuniary recompence. These exercises are not established to obtain your money, but to win your souls! With all integrity we declare, that we have found the Gospel a blessing to ourselves; imparting peace to the conscience, and comfort to the soul in the day of sorrow. We therefore commend it to you, and "entreat you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Have you doubts, I would respect them, and entreat you candidly and prayerfully to seek after the truth, and remember the saying of our Lord, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Pray to the Father of your spirits, and the God of all the earth, to enlighten your minds and to renew your hearts, by the promised influences of his Holy Spirit, and blessed by his pardoning mercy through Christ Jesus, you shall find peace, and be conducted onward to a blissful immortality, which may God of his infinite mercy grant, for Christ's sake. Amen.

* Note G.

APPENDIX.

MODERN LONDON, the Metropolis of the Empire, includes within its gigantic bounds two ancient cities, one borough town, and fifty villages, which, now united, stretch themselves over a site seven miles in length, and never less than two miles in width. Consequently its ecclesiastical, municipal, and parochial divisions are irregular and involved, and it is no easy task accurately to define its bounds, or to report its circumstances. I have, however, attempted to furnish some illustrations, though confessedly imperfect, of its religious statistics; and happy shall I be, if some one, of more leisure and information than myself, undertake a full and accurate review of this moral condition.

NOTE A.

I have attempted, in vain, to procure an accurate return of the state of religious education in the Metropolis; and will, therefore, content myself by quoting the statement of a writer in the *Evangelical Magazine* for February, 1827. "Notwithstanding all that is doing, there are at least FORTY THOUSAND children in the Metropolis who are not provided for, and cannot be received into our Sunday Schools. Southwark has provided for 6000 more children than can be received into the various places of worship."

NOTE B.

The Society for promoting Christian Instruction in London, are happy in the gratuitous services of a large number of pious male and female visitors, who pay visits *twice*, and in some cases *four* times a month, to nearly 12,000 families, with whom they leave a small book of religious and moral tracts, which is exchanged for another at the next visit, and thus an intercourse commences, highly conducive to the moral improvement and religious instruction of the parties they visit.

Note C.

I wish not to become an alarmist, but I think it is evident that increased activity and growing numbers characterize the Roman Catholics of the Metropolis;—not to mention their zealous circulation of tracts and books, *a very novel procedure with them*, nor to compare the number and size of their chapels in London now, with those they occupied thirty years ago;—I beg to submit to the reader the following statement of baptisms administered in their leading chapels for the last five years, as published in the *Catholic Miscellany* for March.

Place.	1822.	1823.	1824.	1825.	1826.
Moorfields	570	684	698	765	820
Virginia Street	410	424	453	509	591
Lincoln's Inn Fields	331	338	465	445	462
Warwick Street	141	172	218	208	243
Manchester Square	261	236	278	313	298
South Street, Grosvenor Square	75	152	101	134	172
Romney Terrace, Westminster .	93	127	134	120	206
Cadagon Street, Sloane Street .	50	59	67	55	75
St. George's Fields	367	396	457	566	504
Wade Street, Poplar	78	98	121	110	128
	2376	2686	2992	3225	3499

Their Chapels at Stratford, Bermondsey, Greenwich, Somers Town, Hampstead, Kensington, Hammersmith, and Woolwich, are omitted.

It is supposed by various writers on political economy, that the proportion of births to the population varies in different countries from 1 in 17, to 1 in 49. If then we take the estimate the Roman Catholics make of *thirty* persons to *one* birth, we may, perhaps, approach to a correct average. Let then my readers observe,

Baptisms in 1822 . . . 2376
30
71,280

Baptisms in 1826 . . .	3499
	30
	104,970

being an increase of 33,690 persons in five years! Will the emigration of Roman Catholics from Ireland and the Continent to this City account for this? I think by no means!

Note D.

On this subject I beg leave to quote a tract published by the Rev. J. H. Stewart, M. A. Minister of Percy Chapel, entitled, "The State of the Metropolis, or the Importance of a Revival of Religion in London."

"And what is the state of our churches, while these outward profanations of the Sabbath take place? Let those answer this question, who are present when the office of the Holy Sacrament is performing, or at the *afternoon* service. If it was said that there were *Six Thousand* stated communicants west of Temple Bar, though there are above *Three Hundred Thousand* inhabitants, would it be to underate the number?"

While this be the state of the Established Church, things are yet worse amongst the Evangelical Dissenters, as I do not think there are six hundred communicants amongst them in the same direction.

Note E.

As my memory distinctly recalled this passage, I felt myself bound in honour not to suppress it, though it involves a personal allusion.

The ancient Meeting-house, Founders' Hall, Lothbury, is the place to which I referred; and a person calling himself the *Reverend* Robert Taylor, A. B., late of St. John's, Cambridge, a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, Orator of the Christian Evidence Society, and Chaplain of the Society of Universal Benevolence, is "*the mountebank preacher of infidelity*" I described. When this unhappy apostate delivered what he entitled,

"The Inaugural Lecture," before his "Society of Christian Evidence," in November, 1824, he opened his address in the following terms:—"If any occasion on which men can be assembled, may be accurately termed *solemn*, the term is appropriate to the business on which we are here together this evening;—not met, I hope, for the vain-glorious exhibition of talent, and parade of eloquence, but for the highest purpose for which we are endued with the faculties of reason and of speech—TO INQUIRE AFTER TRUTH! If ever dispositions of seriousness, of modesty, and of piety become us, it is then especially when we are invited to the exercises of the noblest faculties of man, and convened to apply those faculties to the contemplation of the most important subject in which man is interested—the subject which immediately involves his rule of life, his consolation in death, and his hope of happiness beyond the grave." Had this person displayed "the *seriousness*" and "*modesty*," he here professes, I should have been the last man to call him "a *mountebank*," though he publicly taught infidelity; but a single number of a work,* the avowed organ of his miserable party, affords abundant illustration of the propriety of the epithet. Not to comment on the description we have of his dress, "*an elegant shovel-hat, a rich laced sacerdotal coat, with bullioned sleeves, and a quizzing-glass suspended from a superb gold chain;*" a quotation or two from his 59th oration, before this Christian Evidence Society, will illustrate the low buffoonery to which this man, who once associated with scholars and gentlemen, condescends, in order to gain the applause of a mob, and the paltry sixpences they subscribe for the pleasure of listening to "the *reverend* orator!"

"They invite us (says he) to come and partake of the Lord's Supper, and call it a feast and a banquet, and the 'strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by bread and wine.' *(Delivered in the tone of a school-boy saying his Catechism!)* They give us bread and wine enough to starve a sparrow: so much wine as would put the candle out, and a bit of bread no bigger than the tip of my finger, after

* The Republican, March 17, 1826.

saying more grace about it than our Worshipful Court of Aldermen ever heard over all the calapash and calapee that strengthens and refreshes their goodly Corporation ! !"

In another passage too blasphemous for transcription, he quotes a sentence of the Decalogue, to which a note is carefully appended, "*Delivered in the pompous manner of a priest at the altar!*" When a man professing to be a public instructor, condescends to low jests and mimickry—does he not deserve the title of a *mountebank?* What shall we say too of the *good faith* of this reverend orator, who makes the Society which he announced as "instituted for the suppression of infidelity and scepticism, by means of rational discussion alone," the instrument of propagating his blasphemy—not by *rational* discussion, but by ribaldry, which would disgrace a pot-house? But this wretched man, by his open assaults on Christianity, whilst yet eating the bread of her ministers—by his mean and hypocritical apology, and humble petition to be restored to church favour, by the falsehood with which he attempted, in the public journals, to explain that act of tergiversation, and by the unblushing and deliberate untruths he published in his "*Manifesto,*" which have been so completely exposed in "the Answer," to that paper, published by our Society, must have convinced most respectable deists, and all honest men, that he is destitute (at least in theological matters) of all *good faith*, and deserves not to be trusted for a moment by those who respect their own understandings!

The police reports of the City of London will justify all the other imputations contained in the sentence to which this note is appended.

Is it not a matter of deep regret, that the Dissenters of London should permit, through their want of public spirit, not only Founders' Hall Meeting-house, but since this Discourse was preached, the more commodious and modern Meeting-house of Salters' Hall, to be employed for these pestilent purposes!

Note F.

There is great difficulty in obtaining an accurate return of the various places of worship in this vast City, yet the following statement will, I believe, approach very near to the truth.

Episcopal Churches and Chapels	200
Independent Chapels	66
Wesleyan Methodist Do.	36
Baptist Do.	32
Calvinistic Methodist Do.	30
Presbyterian (Scotch and Unitarian) Do. . . .	16
Roman Catholic Do.	14
Quakers' Meetings	6
	400

If we calculate that the average attendance at each place is 500 persons, which is certainly the greatest extent we can allow, and add 250 more for the fluctuating hearers at the several services of each Sabbath, it will give a result of 300,000 persons; now the population of this wide-spread Metropolis is estimated, by the last census, at 1,274,800 souls; from which subtract the feeble minority above, and we find NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOUR THOUSAND, EIGHT HUNDRED persons neglecting the public worship of God. And though considerable deductions are to be made for young children, sick persons, and the aged and infirm, yet, after all, the multitude, without even the forms of religion around us, is most appalling. The following statement will illustrate the occupations of the Sabbath:—"It appears that of the papers at present published in London on the Sunday, there are circulated, on the lowest estimate, 45,000 copies, and that, upon the most moderate computation, between 2 and 300,000 readers of these papers are to be found in the Metropolis alone, while the great number of pressmen, distributors, master-venders, hawkers, and subordinate agents of both sexes, and of all ages, who are necessarily employed on the Sabbath, all tend to the most flagrant breach of the day of rest."

In such a state we cannot wonder at the report of Mr. Wontner, the excellent Governor of Newgate, by which it appears, that during the year 1826 there were committed to that gaol,

Males under 21 years of age	1227
Females ditto ditto . .	442
Males above 21	1096
Females ditto	166
	2931

Being an increase of 547 commitments in the past year!!

Must we not adopt the energetic language of a Clergyman of the Established Church, and say, "Such a mine of heathenism, and consequent profligacy and danger, under the very meridian, as it is supposed, of Christian illumination, and accumulated around the very centre and heart of British prosperity, liberty, and civilization, cannot be contemplated without terror by any real and rational friend of our established government; and is surely sufficient to awaken the anxious attention of every true patriot, every enlightened statesman, every sincere advocate of suffering humanity, every intelligent and faithful Christian!"

Note G.

The Course of Lectures to Mechanics were on the following Subjects, and delivered at the City Chapel, Grub Street, on every Thursday Evening, at Eight o'Clock, from Nov. 2, 1826, to Jan. 25, 1827.

Introductory Lecture.—On the Moral and Spiritual Claims of the Metropolis—Rev. J. Blackburn.

The Creation—Rev. J. P. Smith, D.D.

The State of Innocence—Rev. W. Harris, LL.D.

The Apostacy—Rev. H. F. Burder, M.A.

The Origin and Design of Sacrifices—Rev. F. A. Cox, LL.D.

The Character and Translation of Enoch—Rev. John Morison.

The History of Noah—Rev. T. Dobson.

The Flood—Rev. J. Fletcher, M.A.

The Building of Babel and Confusion of Tongues—Rev. R. Philip.

The Call of Abraham—Rev. R. Vaughan.

The Offering of Isaac—Rev. John Styles, D.D.

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—Rev. S. Curwen.

The Concluding Lecture—Rev. J. Clayton, Jun. M.A.

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